Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 1 November, 1990 $3 £1.50

EDITORIAL

Welcome, reader, to 'The MacGuffin' and its SIG (Special Interest Group) whose stated aim is to provide a forum for people who wish to correspond about aspects of world cinema.

Our members by definition regularly watch films or videos and respect the work of Alfred Hitchcock. Naturally, the actual contents of 'The MacGuffin' must depend on what each of us cares to write in about.

As editor, I hope to see us strike a balance between Hitchcock and non-Hitchcock material. As a Hitchcock buff myself, I look forward to swapping views and receiving feedback from many of you about what is practically my favourite topic. And as a film scholar (part-time), I like to think that we might become a meeting place for informed reviews and opinion.

Informed? I will count any film buff informed who knows some film history, understands what a film director does, and can tell you why Stanley Kubrick's films are superior to Stanley Kramer's. Anything else will be a bonus.

I hope that our SIG will have a feel about it of being a friendly, not-too-formal group, notable for its unity-in-diversity. Already we have readers in three or four countries, some of them still at school, others, well, a whole lot older than that.

Now, about the name, 'The MacGuffin'. The term is Hitchcock's. He used it to describe a part of his films to which the characters - and the audience - give great attention although it actually counts for little within the film's design. It might, for example, be the papers the spies are trying to smuggle out of the country in The 39 Steps. At this point I always think of T.S.Eliot's definition of 'meaning' in poetry: how it is like the bone thrown by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind - while the poem, the burglar, goes about its real business.

In other words, please think of our small newsletter as at best merely a stimulus to the main business of enjoying movies, Hitchcock's included. The French word distraction with its secondary meaning of 'entertainment' rather gives the idea.

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'The MacGuffin' has minimal philosophy. For one thing, when judging a movie I don't set much store by abstract principles. Also, I happen to believe that what traditionally passes as entertainment is often a whole lot more than that - but that words are inadequate to say why. At best, you can say that a great film like the musical Singin' in the Rain has things like vitality and inventiveness and good humour. The latter quality, which the late Leonard Bernstein saw in Mozart, audiences appreciate anyway and don't need critics' circumlocutions to tell them about.

Things are a little different when it comes to explicating philosophy in a film.

That's why I shan't apologise for letting my fascination with the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer show in this issue. A few years ago Professor Don Cupitt, in his excellent 'Sea of Faith' series (BBC-TV), referred to Schopenhauer's pervasive influence on the modern film. I began to read Schopenhauer and soon noticed some intriguing parallels with Hitchcock. (I also quickly grew to admire Schopenhauer's moody genius, not the least part of which is his contempt for abstract philosophical systems. Some modern film theorists should heed him.)

Indeed, to pursue the personal note for a moment, these days my main lines of inquiry into Hitchcock are just two. The first consists of tracing similarities between Schopenhauer's thought and the increasingly pessimistic films Hitchcock made after he went to America in 1939. (Both men were political conservatives - and both, for what it's worth, liked to read the London 'Times' each day, even though living abroad.) My second main approach to Hitchcock involves noting the countless borrowings in his films: from other movies, from literature, from just looking around. For instance, he seems to have designed and photographed the scene on a ferry boat in I Confess (1953) to resemble anti-Communist shorts of the period. In Marnie (1964) we hear children recite the very counting-out rhyme that the famous book, 'The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren', says represents their emancipation from fear of death - which would seem most pertinent to Marnie herself.

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In this issue of 'The MacGuffin' we watch Hitchcock directing Family Plot, we visit some of the locations of Vertigo, and we share with reader Harold Shuckhart his boyhood memories of growing up in and around a picture house in Minnesota. Films reviewed include Anatole Litvak's All This and Heaven Too (1940) and James Foley's Reckless (1984). There is also a review of the book 'Film As Social Practice'.

To all of you who have supported this pilot-issue of 'The MacGuffin', I say 'Thank you'. I would especially single out for thanks The Old Cinema Bookshop at Hay-on-Wye, Wales. (See 'Letters'.)

To make my gratitude concrete, everyone who receives the current issue - and anyone else who by January 1991 inquires about joining the Film/Hitchcock SIG - will be sent a complimentary copy of the next issue. In return, please note, I will be asking you to thereafter take out an annual subscription costing $12 Australian ($8 Australian for people under 18).

Present plans have 'The MacGuffin' appearing quarterly. Still,if enough of us write often enough, anything's possible. What was it that Doris Day sang in The Man Who Knew Too Much? Que sera, sera?

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LETTERS

V(anessa) Sarada Holt (age 17), Bordentown, New Jersey, USA

"Hi! It's about time someone had a film SIG, as it's one of my greatest obsessions and I'd love to be on your mailing list for it. Of course, I have enormous respect and admiration for A.H. films ... my other favourites being A Clockwork Orange, anything by David Lynch, and a number of other cult, foreign and unusual films. I'd be happy to do some submitting as well, once I get a 'feel' of the publication. Thanks!"

* * *

Ronald Conway, Hawthorn, Vic., Australia

"I was watching Jamaica Inn [Hitchcock, 1939] the other night and thinking that the role of Squire Pengallen was probably one of Charles Laughton's most over-the-top performances, but the film still had many good moments. Alas, in those days they could hardly have portrayed Daphne Du Maurier's original smuggling boss as he was in the novel - a coldly demented clergyman still worshipping the old pagan gods! Neither the British censor nor the Hays office would have approved. Hence 'the Squire' provided a major weakness of the script."

* * *

Greg Coombes, Managing Director, Quinto Bookshops (Hay) Ltd, The Old Cinema, Hay-on-Wye, Wales

"Thank you for your recent letter and the kind donation of 'Australian Silent Films.' We are delighted to display your notices about the Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group. We have put one in the foyer and another next to the Cinema Book Stock in the depths of the building."

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Chris Marker on 'Vertigo'

(The following is an excerpt from the soundtrack of Sans Soleil/Sunless, made in 1983. The narrator is a French woman who describes her correspondence with a Japanese man, an inveterate globe-trotter. Chris Marker has been called "the cinema's greatest essayist".)

He wrote me that only one film had been capable of portraying impossible memory, insane memory - Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo.

In the spiral of the titles he saw time covering a field ever wider as it moved away, a cyclone whose present movement contains, motionless, the eye.

In San Francisco he had made his pilgrimage to all the film's locations: the florist Podesta Baldocchi, where James Stewart spies on Kim Novak, he the hunter, she the prey - or was it the other way round? The tiles hadn't changed.

He had driven up and down the hills of San Francisco where Jimmie Stewart/Scottie follows Kim Novak/Madeleine. It seems to be a question of trailing, of enigma, of murder, but in truth it's a question of power and freedom, of melancholy and dazzlement, so carefully coded within the spiral that you could miss it and not discover immediately that this vertigo of space in reality stands for the vertigo of time.

He had followed all the trails, even to the cemetery at Mission Dolores where Madeleine came to pray at the grave of a woman long since dead, whom she should not have known.

He followed Madeleine, as Scottie had done, to the Museum of the Legion of Honour, before the portrait of a dead woman she should not have known. And on the portrait, as in Madeleine's hair, the spiral of time.

The small Victorian hotel where Madeleine disappeared had disappeared itself. Concrete had replaced it, at the corner of Eddy and Gough. On the other hand, the sequoia-cut was still in Muir Woods. On it Madeleine traced the short distance between two of those concentric lines that measured the age of the tree, and said, "Here I was born, and here I died."

He remembered another film in which this passage was quoted. The sequoia was the one in the Jardin aux Plantes (?) in Paris, and the hand pointed to a place outside the tree, outside of time.

The painted horse at San Juan Bautista, his eye that looked like Madeleine's: Hitchcock had invented nothing, it was all there.

He had run under the arches of the promenade in the Mission as Madeleine had run towards her death - or was it hers? From this fake tower - the only thing that Hitchcock had added - he imagined Scottie as time's fool of love, finding it impossible to live with memory without falsifying it, inventing a double for Madeleine in another dimension of time, a zone that would belong only to him and from which he could decipher the undecipherable story that had begun at Golden Gate when he had pulled Madeleine out of San Francisco Bay, when he had saved her from death before casting her back to death - or was it the other way round?

"In San Francisco I made the pilgrimage of a film I had seen 19 times. ..."

(Editor's note. Would anyone know the name of the other film, mentioned by Marker, that refers to the sequoia scene in Vertigo? By the way, there's a second article on Vertigo elsewhere in this issue.)

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BEST FILMS

In 1982 'Sight & Sound' polled international critics to obtain the following eleven-best films list. Compare it with film buff Leslie Halliwell's personal list of favourites, printed alongside. (And guess who the middle-brow is!)

Citizen Kane	Citizen Kane
La Règle du Jeu	Trouble in Paradise
Seven Samurai	The Bride of Frankenstein
Singin' in the Rain	Le Million
Eight and a Half	A Matter of Life and Death
The Battleship Potemkin	Lost Horizon (1937)
L'Avventura	Sons of the Desert
The Magnificent Ambersons	The Philadelphia Story
Vertigo (Hitchcock)	The Maltese Falcon
The General	The Lady Vanishes (Hitchcock)
The Searchers	

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Growing Up in the Movie House

I didn't actually live in the theatre, or movie house as my grandmother called it. My mother worked in the Gopher Theatre, in a small town in Western Minnesota, after my father died in 1945, when I was three. It was easier for her to bring me along than to find a reliable baby sitter. I would watch the feature all the way through and then the second set of previews and the cartoon and the newsreel or travelogue, and sometime after the beginning of the second presentation of the feature I usually fell asleep, curled up in the seat, with my head flopped over the armrest. When my mother was done counting the money and balancing the tickets, she would walk down the aisle to find me, snoring softly in the front row.

Frequently my aunt would work in the concession stand, selling candy and popcorn. Sometimes I would go with my grandmother and help her clean the theatre in the early morning. I am probably one of the few people alive who knows why the theatre floor is not a mosaic of Ju-Jubes, Milk-Buds and Nibs: my grandmother scraped them away with a putty knife, along with the chewing gum.

When I was eleven, I was allowed to help resupply the concession stand. While my mother or my aunt would fill the candy boxes, I would haul a 50 gallon can of lard for the popcorn machine, or perhaps a 25 pound sack of popcorn itself. I know now that the grease and the salt in the popcorn wasn't good for anyone, but I still remember the wonderful way it tasted. In the 1950s the theatre brought in a hot butter machine. After all that, it's a wonder my cholesterol level isn't Alpine high.

To actually work in the theatre, a person was supposed to be sixteen. I started working there when I was fourteen. My older brother graduated from high school at the end of my eighth grade year in school. He had been changing the marquee for a couple of years, and when he left for college the manager said it would be all right for me to change the marquee and posters if I didn't do it at night. I would go with my grandmother in the mornings before school, and while she cleaned I changed the letters on the marquee and the posters in the windows. I particularly loved the little posters. There were two window displays; one was for a full size poster, about three feet by five feet; the other for eight smaller posters, each about ten inches by sixteen inches. I had been changing the posters for several months before I discovered that they were numbered in sequence to match the action of the movie. You can still buy the large posters: my son bought me one of The Day the Earth Stood Still. I wonder what ever became of those marvellous still picture sets. [Have you tried the Larry Edmunds Bookshop in Hollywood? - Ed.]

When I was fully sixteen, I began as a part time projectionist. The theatre had two projectors, each with a capacity of about 25 minutes of film on a reel. When the film was nearly done on one projector, the projectionist would switch to the other projector. On some older films, my eye still catches the timing signals in the upper right hand corner of the film. The first mark indicated when to start the projector and the second mark was for the actual switch to the alternate projector.

As projectionist, I had control over the machines that actually put the picture on the screen and the sound into the air. While I loved the independence of projecting, I usually got stuck with Saturday, the worst night. As projectionist on the last night of a showing, I had to run the film onto the reels supplied from the distributor. All other times, we were able to use our own reels which were in good shape. The reels that came with the film were flimsy and frequently bent out of shape. The film would catch on the reels or the reels would knock and bang in the projector. I also had to load the next film to be shown onto our house reels so that they would be ready for Sunday's matinee. After the previews had been shown for the second time on Saturday night, I had to cut out the preview of Sunday's film and package it for mailing, splice in the preview for the upcoming Sunday's film, and fix the ads.

The ads were short commercial announcements from local businesses. They generally ran about 30 seconds and were made from a generic film with a picture of the local business place spliced in. The voice-over was done by an announcer who was either sickeningly sweet or pep fest bold. The ads were strung together for a run of a week or more. They were changed on Saturdays: some cut out and new ones spliced in. It was fiddly work, done between operating the projectors and winding in the next feature. I also spliced in the theatre's own announcements: popcorn and candy are available at the concession stand, do not spit on the floor, no smoking except in the lobby or smoking lounge, women with crying babies should use the crying room, and so on.

When I was done with all of the above, there was usually about an hour left of the feature. At that point, I would slip downstairs for a few minutes in the middle of each reel and change the marquee, climbing a tall step-ladder with a basket full of masonite letters mounted on heavy wires.

A room to one side of the lobby had one wall covered with pegs, one for each letter of the alphabet, and for all the extra gimmicks: double-feature, also, with, starring, and limited punctuation. Each new marquee was a puzzle: what letters should be left up from the previous feature and what new letters must be carried up? I prided myself on being able to set the marquee in only two trips up the ladder, once to take down the unnecessary letters from the previous feature and once to put up the additional letters required for the next feature.

My last couple of years in high school, I was working three nights a week projecting. It really wasn't that bad. Out of each 20 minute reel, I would be working about five minutes. Between changeovers, I would study or read the racy novels the older projectionist had brought in. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, I would change the marquee during the second feature, and on the nights I wasn't running the projectors, I would sometimes cover for the manager during the second feature, so that he could go home early and rest for his day job, selling insurance.

Kids today have grown up with television; they are clearly affected by it and in turn have affected it. I grew up with movies. Perhaps they affected me as profoundly as television affects my 20 year old son. The main difference is that I was an unusual case: the kid who had seen every movie show in town, except The Thing, since 1948; most kids my age saw one movie a week or less. Today almost every kid watches some television; high school graduates have spent as much time watching television as they have spent in school; and television with its flash and entertainment value, with its sex and violence, may have made a deeper impression on those students than the educational system has.

The things I have carried away from the movies are interesting. I am still fascinated with old films, and when I write fiction it's like I'm describing a movie that is running in my head. I wonder what today's kids are carrying away from television?

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NEWS

Peter Ustinov to star as 'The Man Who Loved Hitchcock'

Peter Ustinov flew out of Australia recently after concluding a successful season of his one-man stage show. He was bound first for New York and the special United Nations Children's Week, a cause close to his heart. From there he would head for Hollywood and Beverley Hills where a feature called The Man Who Loved Hitchcock will be filmed.

Ustinov will play Hitchcock in the twilight of his life. Hitch's help is sought by investigators when a series of murders are committed during a retrospective of his films, each one inspired by the previous night's screening. At one point Hitch is actually captured by the murderer and is put on a train handcuffed to the composer Bernard Herrmann who wrote the scores for Vertigo and Psycho. Other scenes will be filmed at places Hitch often visited, such as Chasens Restaurant and the Beverley Hills Hotel.

Ustinov's stage show and television appearances prove him to be a gifted mimic. He can

produce in an instant Hitch's curiously flat-sounding English voice. The film should be a scream.

'Fantasia' lovingly restored for its 50th

Preservation fever is spreading in the US film industry. Following last year's restoration of Lawrence of Arabia, Tom Jones, and other blockbusters, brand-new 70-millimetre prints of Ben Hur and The Sound of Music have lately turned up in Los Angeles theatres.

Universal have announced that Stanley Kubrick's 1960 epic Spartacus will undergo an extensive 70-mm restoration for 1991 release. Columbia will follow suit with The Guns of Navarone and The Last Picture Show.

But possibly the best news of all is that Fantasia (1940) is now being re-released in something like its original condition and running time. On its first run outside major cities, Disney's brilliant animation set to classical music flopped with the less sophisticated audiences, and was cut from 135 minutes to 88 minutes. Reports mention restoration to a two-hour running time in 1946. There was another re-issue in 1977.

In 1982 the film's entire musical soundtrack was re-recorded by conductor Irwin Kostal, much to the dismay of Disney purists. Now for its 50th anniversary, Fantasia has been restored once again. Leopold Stokowski's original performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra is being used, and the image refurbished. A special crew have spent the past two years going over the original negative, hand-polishing it frame by frame and using razor-blade microsurgery to remove particles of dust.

Steinbeck's 'Lifeboat' sunk

Earlier this year there were short-lived plans for the first publication of John Steinbeck's novella of Lifeboat. Researchers found it in the archives of 20th Century Fox and, thinking it was in the public domain, took it to a publisher. Subsequently they learned that the author's widow holds the copyright, and she has refused permission to publish. Steinbeck wrote the novella in the early 1940s at the request of Alfred Hitchcock and producer Kenneth MacGowan, who planned to base a screenplay on it. When the film was released in 1944, Steinbeck claimed that his story had been distorted and asked to have his name removed from it. The studio, however, left him as co-writer. According to Mrs Steinbeck, he didn't want the story published and it probably never will be.

The 1990 Australian Film Awards

The film Flirting, a sequel to the 1987 winner The Year My Voice Broke, won Best Film at the recent Australian Film Institute Awards. Like its predecessor, Flirting shows what it was like to be an adolescent in rural Australia in the 1960s.

Meanwhile, New Zealand director Jane Campion's mini-series, An Angel At My Table, which has become a widely acclaimed cinema film, goes from strength to strength with a top critics' award at the Toronto Festival of Festivals in Canada.

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FILM REVIEWS

'All This and Heaven Too' (1940) - An Underestimated Classic

Meticulous craftsmanship and fine acting never go amiss in any film regardless of passing vogues in theme and style. The triennium 1939-1941 produced so many famous Hollywood feature films that even some quite distinguished productions never acquired the esteem which was their due. A cardinal example was Anatole Litvak's All This and Heaven Too (1940), based upon the best-selling book by Rachel Field who chronicled in fiction form the remarkable true story of her great-aunt, Henriette Desportes-Field. Jack Warner of Warner Brothers felt so strongly about the film's worth that he named himself as co-producer and he spent more money upon it than any previous Warner production except A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1935. Using nearly sixty indoor sets and finishing with an original footage of just on three hours, it was only 40 minutes shorter than Gone With the Wind. Even the release-cut at 143 minutes makes a long, sombre period-film in the high tragic manner which is not to the taste of every cinema buff. Worse still, it was all but dismissed over the years by the tag 'woman's picture' - which hardly does justice to the profundity of its sentiments.

All This and Heaven Too relates how the fate of a young governess to the household of the Duc and Duchesse de Praslin in 1846 helped to change the history of France. It climaxes in the notorious Praslin murder case where the desperate Duc, presumably in love with the governess, beat his half-insane, slatternly wife to death. This forced the governess, Henriette Deluzy-Desportes, to flee to America after she was released from prison due to insufficient evidence. The film script by the admirable Casey Robinson deals only with the French half of Henriette's story. Anatole Litvak made sure that he got the best available cast to fill several exacting dramatic roles. In two biographies, the late Bette Davis grumbled at her restrictions under the iron control and meticulous planning of Litvak. In truth he curbed brilliantly any inclination to chew the scenery which was sometimes her fault under weaker directors. As the quietly-spoken Henriette, Davis gave easily one of her three greatest performances as one of the screen's most credible noble heroines. She was matched and nearly surpassed by Charles Boyer as the Duc de Praslin: Boyer's real anguish over the imminent Nazi invasion of France was translated into a performance of almost unbearable intensity, culminating in a death-bed scene which still holds up magnificently, even for today's blasé audiences.

The film has, of course, some of the gaucheries of its time. The Praslin children, who play a prominent part in the scenario, are certainly effective but too incongruously American in style. Also the device of treating the main story as a huge flashback from a mid-19th century American schoolroom works less well today than it did then. There is a tendency to become downright mawkish at a couple of points. Even so, the picture is well worth considering on many counts: for the quite superb performances of Boyer and Davis, and that of Barbara O'Neill as the Duchesse (who was forced to rather overplay because she was not permitted to look blowsy enough), for the lavish art direction which recreated the Paris of Louis-Philippe down to the last centimetre of damask, for the moody but sharp black-and-white cinematography of Ernest Haller, and for one of Max Steiner's very best romantic scores.

Curiously enough, All This and Heaven Too may be the only love story of its time where the principal characters never even kiss or embrace. Henriette Desportes and the unhappy Duc may or may not have been sexually intimate. Rachel Field's novel says not, but the lovers really took their secret to the grave. Not the least of the qualities of this one-of-a-kind movie is its capacity to convey mature adult passion without ever mentioning sex - a likely impossibility for a production today.

Ronald Conway

'Reckless' (1984)

My 'Video Movie Guide' lists Reckless (**) right after Rebel Without a Cause (*****), which rather puts James Foley's excellent 'angry young man' movie in the shadow of Nicholas Ray's classic.

Which is unfortunate. Admittedly, hardly anything about the plot of Reckless is new, hence the low ratings it gets from the capsule-comment reviewers. The very setting in an unidentified American steelworks town will remind you of countless similar towns you've seen in movies before (The Deer Hunter, Four Friends, etc.).

Foley even courts comparisons with Marlon Brando in The Wild One and James Dean in Rebel. His quizzical, leather-jacketed anti-hero from the wrong side of town (Aidan Quinn) rides a motor-bike and plays a dangerous game of 'chicken' with himself at a lookout near his home. He pursues the staid, blonde cheerleader heroine (Daryl Hannah) that we've already seen in other teen movies about class difference. At times, too, I was reminded of the Brando - Eva Marie-Saint relationship in On the Waterfront.

But plot isn't everything, and Reckless has energy and authenticity on its side. Foley (here making his feature debut) invests every familiar action with a tense, explosive physicality. The sex scenes are very contemporary. I particularly liked the handling of the scene in a school boiler-room (at night, the danger of discovery adding to the tension) and the way the director immediately followed it with more-of-the-same at the girl's place next day when the family is (supposed to be) away. As I said: energy and authenticity stamp themselves on this film.

The scenes between Quinn and his aging steelworker father (Kenneth McMillan) are unsentimental. One small detail had Quinn having to go to the steelworks to fetch his father on the motor-bike - and chaining him with a steel chain and padlock in lieu of a safety-belt.

A pulsing rock score, including several INXS tracks, is expressive throughout. I was first drawn to this film by a recommendation from local teen-movies authority, critic Adrian Martin. So let Adrian have the closing word:

> The desire for freedom and love, the yearning to escape a harsh and miserable daily reality - such themes are very familiar, but Foley gives them an urgent, burning expression. Anyone who is resistant to 'youth' movies should find out from this one, once and for all, what youth-on-film is all about.

K.M.

(Also recommended: Ermanno Olmi's Long Live the Lady. A delightful, mischievous, gentle comedy, about a group of catering-school teenagers employed for a banquet at a remote château. Filmed somewhat after the satiric manner of Bunuel. Crawl over razor-blades to see it.)

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The book and the film (e.g. Selwyn Jepson's 'Man Running' and Hitchcock's Stage Fright)

Book reviews (e.g. S.S.Prawer's 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror')

Plus whatever lands on the editor's desk: articles, letters, reviews, clippings, etc.

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BOOK REVIEW

Turner, Graeme: 'Film As Social Practice' (Routledge: London & New York; paperback)

Here's a book that tells you the sort of things being taught in 'Film 1' at your local tertiary institution. Its main premise is that a movie is more than just a consciously authored work of art, and needs to be understood in a multitude of contexts:

> Understanding a movie is not essentially an aesthetic practice; it is a social practice which mobilizes the full range of meaning systems within the culture.

The author, an Australian academic, cites the revealing case of the German silent classic Metropolis (1926). To its Jewish director, Fritz Lang, the film was just a rather "silly" melodrama about a workers' revolution in a city of the future. The revolution turns out to have been instigated by the city's despotic ruler and a mad scientist in order to discredit a (literally) underground liberation movement. Thus neither the sneaky bosses nor the duped workers emerge with much credit. Although the film establishes the oppression of the workers, it ends with everyone merely having a convenient change of heart.

Well, Adolf Hitler loved the film, and offered Lang the post of head of the German film industry and the status of 'honorary Aryan'. (Lang fled to America.) Clearly, the director had not fully understood what he was doing. He had insufficiently grasped the meanings his culture gave his film. According to Graeme Turner:

> These included the dominant images of power as patriarchal, fatherly, and the assumption that political unrest was always undesirable ... . The pentangle (five-pointed star) used to represent the evil of the scientist Rotwang, with its close similarity to the star of David, invokes anti-Semitism. The film's view of the people as gullible and to be saved from themselves is probably also traceable to cultural roots.

Turner's book, then, tries to point the lessons of Lang's mistake. To show how wide a field the cinema covers, the book includes chapters on film as an industry, as an academic study, as a structured language; there are also chapters on film audiences and on ideology. Some extended analysis is given of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and Desperately Seeking Susan.

Turner is very good at spotting and explaining contradictions in films. He shows how John Ford's famous western, The Searchers, is resolved in a way that necessitates its protagonist Ethan (John Wayne) resorting to methods that 'belong' to his opposite number, the Indian called Scar. Ethan's savagery, says Turner, could not serve "as a model for solving disputes, but that is narrative's function - to resolve symbolically what cannot be actually resolved". (Presumably, this observation could apply to Metropolis, too. Fritz Lang was always a woolly thinker about real social issues. As perhaps was Ford. Turner doesn't say whether he thinks this should affect our estimation of their art.)

The author is very fair in the way he reports the limitations of current theoretical positions (for which he is basically an advocate). "The comprehensiveness of theories of ideology has worried many people," Turner says, "so that theories of resistance to the ideological through the pleasures of the body have surfaced". He has doubts whether "our pleasure at a car chase on film or our day-to-day experience of physical pleasure is constructed in ideology". Which makes for refreshing reading after the excesses you come across from some writers on film today.

My position on these matters stems from my respect for possibly the most comprehensive of all theorists about life and perception (which I would guess includes making and watching movies). The thought of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) spanned both West and East, both the human and the animal (and vegetable and mineral) domains. He identified 'life' with Kant's supposedly unknowable thing-in-itself, but suggested that it might indeed be knowable through direct bodily experience (which does away with two of the three basic categories of understanding: space and causality, if not time). Although Turner appears to be ready to reach a similar insight, he quickly falls back on a more conventional formulation:

> It is difficult to get around the sense that there is some genuine reality out there which ideology prevents us getting at. The trick is to realize that whether that is the case or not is immaterial. Our only access to reality is through its representation. (My emphasis)

Of course, I have no quarrel with this as a generalisation. All images of reality are indeed subjective, coded, limited - for us to make the best of. Similarly, when Turner deals with insights into the nature of film derived from psychoanalysis, I find the clarity of his formulations appealing. At one point he commends film theorist Dudley Andrew for giving us "a thoroughly psychoanalytic description of the desire for the image". Here is Andrew:

> Desiring to possess the film, we are confined to merely viewing it. Consequently, the successful film can never ultimately satisfy us ... .

This is pure Schopenhauer! (The description also goes to the heart of a self-reflexive movie like Hitchcock's Vertigo.) Any dissatisfaction I feel with Turner's book, then, relates to the much broader dissatisfaction I often feel when film critics cite some current authority (usually French) as if he or she were holy writ or the only one to have had the knowledge. Those critics seem to me to have egg on their faces. Or, at any rate, in their eyes.

But Turner's book avoids most of the traps, and I recommend it for its sensible, informed introduction to current film studies.

K.M.

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Books, anyone?

Lovers of crime books should get in touch with Post Mortem Books, 58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH, England. They have a huge collection of new and secondhand titles.

Speaking of secondhand books, have you heard of the town of Hay-on-Wye in Wales? I hadn't, until a few months ago. But in that picturesque spot, near the Wales-England border, you can find roughly 25 secondhand bookshops. Among them: Richard Booth's Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford HR3 5AA, U.K.; and The Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford HR3 5DF, U.K. Those two bookshops stock 600,000 volumes between them. Booth's claims to be the biggest secondhand bookshop in the world.

And for that very rare, very hard-to-get title, try writing to Mr Field, All Books Found, 1 Ritson Road, Dalston, London E8 1DE, England. He is expensive but industrious.

Finally, if new books for the general reader are what you seek, Braithwaite & Taylor's

'The Good Book Guide' has become an institution. Write to them at 91 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PS, England. Subscribers to the GBG may also avail themselves of B & T's book ordering service for any book currently in print.

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San Francisco, Hitchcock, and Me

In 1975 I went to Hollywood to interview, if not Alfred Hitchcock (who was in production on Family Plot), some of his noted collaborators. I ended up one evening on the set of Hitchcock's picture, watching Karen Black play a kidnapper in the scene where she collects a ransom diamond.

More about that evening later. My trip to California also allowed me to visit some celebrated Hitchcock locations, among them the city of San Francisco where in 1957 the director shot Vertigo, his masterpiece. This article is largely about that film. If I need to make an occasional philosophical point, well, Vertigo invites no less. I'll try to explain everything as I go.

(a) San Francisco and 'Vertigo'

Several feature films have hinted at the special atmosphere of San Francisco. Two I quite like are George Stevens's I Remember Mama (1948) and Delmer Daves's Dark Passage (1947). Before Vertigo, though, perhaps only author Oscar Wilde had noted a singular feature of the city. "It is an odd thing," a character remarks in 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', "but everyone who disappears is said to be seen [there]. It must be a delightful city, and possess all the attractions of the next world." I fancy Hitchcock's film not only gives that passing remark substance, it lends it a profound meaning.

As I see it, Vertigo is about an ordinary man, the detective Scottie (James Stewart), who clings too hard to life and suffers the consequences. That is, he loses the woman Madeleine (Kim Novak) who for him represents 'eternity'. Scottie's clinging is given a literal enactment at the start of the film when he hangs from guttering above a San Francisco street. The scene works beautifully as suspense while managing to show us, with poetic rightness, something of the distant city's majesty. No-one could blame Scottie for hanging on! Neverthelesss, his resultant sense of weakness later turns him into an obsessed neurotic, and that is what ultimately defeats him - and tragically destroys Madeleine.

So, my first piece of philosophy is this: San Francisco in Vertigo is a city seen sub specie aeternitatis - Spinoza's famous term for "under the aspect of eternity". Given the beauty of the real San Francisco (especially if you happen to glimpse it from one of its hills, rising from the fog), that was never going to be too hard for Hitchcock and his brilliant cameraman, Robert Burks, to suggest. What I would add is that Madeleine's story in the film points up many of the city's features. San Francisco becomes an archetypal place, its history and people representative of all our histories.

Notice that I am saying two things: Vertigo shows us a city belonging at once to this world and another. On the one hand, the real San Francisco has its famous tourist spots, many of which the film highlights. We visit, for example, Ernie's, the celebrated restaurant. These places invite the label "consumerist" and have been so described by at least one film critic. On the other hand, with its missions, forts, shops, and art galleries, San Francisco may also stand for perennial human concerns. Anyone who knows even a small amount of the city's history - how, for instance, it was

founded by the Spanish, and ceded in turn to Mexico and the United States - will appreciate its colourful cosmopolitanism and why one guide book speaks of it as "a city of contrasts - historic and modern, brash and dignified, ... quiet and clatter and more". These more general aspects are equally the film's concern.

Naturally, the tone of the film is different from any guide book's. It is, I think, a tone of pessimism, but justified by the truth about human nature at the film's core. And if for much of its length Vertigo dwells equally on the possibility of another world - or anyway another order of knowing - as on what is measurable in this world, that is only logical, as I will try to indicate.

(b) The Mission Dolores and 'Vertigo'

The above may serve as an introduction. In what follows I will briefly describe how I visited one of San Francisco's famous landmarks, and suggest what it can tell us about a key scene in Vertigo.

The Mission Dolores - originally called the Mission San Francisco de Asis - was founded in the same year (1776) as the city to which it eventually gave its name. That's why, when early in the film Scottie trails Madeleine there, and watches her walk around, we take the hint that her story concerns the city itself. Like Scottie, we soon become intrigued, fascinated. At this early stage, too, the film is already building a motif whereby Madeleine repeatedly leads Scottie from scenes of glare and motion - the city streets - to pockets of shade and stillness, where time seems suspended. It's as if she were promising him an answer to nothing less than what used to be called "the world riddle". (Later I will suggest that it constitutes her power over him.)

To put it another way, Madeleine comes to represent for Scottie the eternal feminine who, in myth or dream, "embodies an experience ... far older than that of the individual". The words are those of psychologist Carl Jung. He adds that such a figure may hold at once a threat and a promise, especially when leading some man (Scottie?) towards "that dark, transpersonal realm ... where things and persons become magical, taboo, dangerous, and yet full of the promise of enrichment and salvation."

So the Mission Dolores is one of several locations in Vertigo that are germane to the film's effect on us. Certainly, when you enter the little church tucked away in a side street, you immediately feel the stillness the film conveys. On the whole, it is a benign feeling. As an official booklet notes: "Within the silent walls of the old mission, time seems to have stopped." The booklet adds that the interior of the church "differs little from its earliest appearance. Decorated redwood ceiling beams are just as created by Indian workmen." There is a slightly sinister note in that, if you care to so interpret the use of Indian labour, but the film does not stress it.

Instead, what happens in the film is that Madeleine goes directly through the church to the cemetery alongside, and Scottie follows at a distance. The ensuing scene is justly famous. By his adroit use of lenses, Robert Burks managed to transform the spot into a hauntingly beautiful maze. Watching the film, you understand how Scottie feels lost as he tries to fathom the truth about Madeleine and her Spanish ancestor who is buried here.

Actually, the real cemetery is much smaller than it looks in the film. Scottie could hardly have spied on Madeleine unobserved. Also, most of the cemetery's plots are neglected, the gravestones crumbling or overturned. An asphalt yard at the back is visible as you walk around.

Let me try to focus what I have been saying by noting another of the film's patterns.

In several scenes like the one at the Mission, Madeleine and Scottie are never entirely alone. Or, at least, there is always some sign of human intercession. Inside the church, an unseen organist is playing. At Muir Woods, the cross-section of a felled tree has been put on display with its explanatory legend (spelling out the tree's extreme age). At the art gallery of the Palace of the Legion of Honour, an attendant hovers, ready to provide Scottie with a catalogue. Once again we feel a connection between Madeleine's story and that of the city and its people. The thing is, the film consistently shows those people as subdued, slow-moving, as if in a dream. Thus San Francisco itself becomes a city of sorrow - and the present name of the Mission Dolores especially significant.

Now, briefly, some more philosophy. To me, the whole of Vertigo speaks with the pessimistic voice of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Schopenhauer was a philosopher who wrote in the shadow of the Romantic Age and espoused an ethics that ultimately renounces this world. The reason has to do with Schopenhauer's view of the world itself. According to his brilliant if gloomy conception, the world is both Will (life-force or life-energy, often seen in man as an egotistical striving) and Representation (a simulacrum, in which Kant's famous thing-in-itself remains elusive). All of Schopenhauer's works contain passages that bear on Vertigo with sometimes uncanny exactitude, but if I had to choose just one it might be the distinction he draws (in 'The World as Will and Representation', Volume One) between temporal justice, that which is administered by the State, and eternal justice, that which prevails in the long term because of what we are. The passage runs to about six pages. As I've implied, it may remind us inter alia of how the poetic-sounding name 'Dolores' speaks for everyone in Hitchcock's film, even for the nominal villain, Gavin Elster. Fittingly, Schopenhauer quotes at this point the Spanish dramatist Calderón, and his philosophical drama 'Life is a Dream':

> For man's greatest offence
> Is that he has been born

"In that verse", says Schopenhauer, "Calderón has merely expressed the Christian dogma of original sin."

(c) 'Vertigo' and 'Family Plot'

Scottie is just an ordinary man, neither saint nor genius nor artist. It follows that Schopenhauer would have foreseen his downfall. Scottie loses Madeleine for the paradoxical reason that he will not let go. Now, Christians speak of the necessity of dying to the world. And Schopenhauer made worldly renunciation the cornerstone of his ethical system, claiming to find confirmation of his views in Buddhist teaching. But if we want to understand the actual mechanics of Scottie's case, Tania Modleski's excellent Hitchcock book, 'The Women Who Knew Too Much', may be the best place to start. Modleski describes how Scottie "oscillates between a passive mode and an active mode, between a ... masochistic fascination with [Madeleine] and a sadistic attempt to gain control over her, to possess her".

In other words, Scottie never arrives at a detached mode of being. His inability to do so, which is poignantly evident in the film's final scenes, constitutes his original sin. But it is ours, too. It is a desire for power. Nearly everyone in Vertigo voices, or displays, such a preoccupation.

To sum up. We identify with Scottie's very human sense of weakness. He, in turn, seeks to identify with something greater than himself: Madeleine, San Francisco, 'eternity'. For both Scottie and Madeleine, such an impulse proves a fatal attraction. And even beauty turns out to be ambiguous, treacherous.

* * *

Ambiguity is also a distinctive feature of Family Plot. But this time the film is a comedy-mystery, a throwback to the delights of British-period Hitchcock (Young and Innocent, say). The only philosophical point I would make about it is one that applies to Hitchcock's films generally: each has moments when what Schopenhauer calls the Will is rendered almost tangible. Such a moment may be a sudden shift in tension, or a scream that rends asunder some structure of logic, or a startling transition (Family Plot has several of these), or a symbol of the Will's pervasive presence (like the eternally restless sea in Vertigo). It may also be an intimation of occult forces or a scene of erotic potency - though in Family Plot the potency has run down, at least as far as the Bruce Dern character is concerned. I mention all this as evidence of the fundamental nature of Hitchcock's art. He always had his finger on his audience's pulse-beat.

When Hitchcock made Family Plot he was 76, and unwell. The evening I watched him at work, filming was scheduled to start after sunset on a back lot at Universal. An airport office, with three or four steps leading up to it, had been built beside a strip of asphalt representing a tarmac. Only the front part of the ground floor was actually standing: the remainder of the building as seen in the film is a small matte painting by the gifted Albert Whitlock.

Whitlock and his team were there early that night, taking measurements and lining up an establishing-shot with cinematographer Leonard South. With dusk came a noticeable drop in temperature. At last, Hitchcock arrived in a chauffeur-driven, heated limousine. He stayed inside it for a good ten minutes, watching with evident approval the preparations for shooting. An assistant director conversed with him through the window. Someone told me that even standing beside the car you might feel hot!

When Hitchcock got out, he moved with assurance, though slowly, to the traditional director's chair. Last-minute activity continued around him. There was no fuss, no raised voices. Hitchcock seemed mentally as alert as ever. It was he who noticed that a defusing scrim on one of the lights had come loose and was casting almost imperceptible shadows on the tarmac. A grip was sent up a ladder to hold the scrim during shooting.

Two police cars serving as props were parked to the left of the scene. Just before the camera was ready to roll, someone went from one car to the other, affixing official-looking number plates. Apparently, some regulation or other prohibited the plates from being brought out until shooting was about to start. In any event, the set and its crew were a model of efficiency.

Two or three takes of the establishing-shot were made. This, I think, was because Whitlock needed some footage to take away with him. The shot involved Karen Black accompanied by an airport security officer (an actor, naturally) walking quickly across the tarmac and entering the office. All of this I watched from a position immediately behind Hitchcock. Between takes, he would tutor Karen in the mysteries of film technique. She seemed happy to feed him leading questions:

"Why do we need this shot at all?", she asked. "Why not just go directly inside the building?"

To which Hitchcock answered in his lugubrious drawl: "You see, Karen, it's like the trombones in the orchestra. We can't just let them blare out in-dis-crim-in-ate-ly, **can** we?"

* * *

Shooting continued into the night. Another prop, a helicopter, stood nearby. It would be used when Ms Black, carrying the ransom diamond for which she had come, took off holding an airport pilot at gunpoint. I was told that the cockpit of the helicopter would later be filmed on a soundstage.

A seance at the start of Family Plot refers to suffering and sorrow. But then it adds a note of reassurance: "From the tears of the past the desert of the heart will bloom." I fancy that Family Plot needed a Vertigo to precede it, and I value them both - one so tragic, the other so genial - in their very different ways.

Ken Mogg

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Ronald Conway is a clinical psychologist, author, and film buff. He has reviewed films in journals and on the radio.

Ken Mogg is editor of 'The MacGuffin', and a member of Australian Mensa.

Harold Shuckhart is immediate past editor of the newsletter published by the American Mensa Writers' SIG.

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ODD SPOT: HITCHCOCK LOSES TEMPER

Alfred Hitchcock used to say that he never lost his temper. Giving him the lie, Signora Jean Salvadore has told all. The Signora was formerly a promoter of the Lake Como area of Italy and, in particular, the 400-year-old Hotel Villa d'Este at Cernobbio on the lake.

One of the regular guests at the hotel was Hitchcock, who would make the staff promise not to tell the press or anyone else when he was staying there.

"Once, however, he arrived when a large wedding was being held at the hotel. As soon as he saw all the photographers he stormed into the office and demanded to know who had told the papers.

"I think he was actually a little offended when we told him that they were not there for him but for the wedding."

(Footnote. Did Hitchcock make a joke of the above incident in the scenes with the ballerina and the press photographers in Torn Curtain?)

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'The MacGuffin' is the newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock SIG, authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individual persons only. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin', which is published at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 2 February, 1991 ISSN 1035-9001 $3 £1.50

EDITORIAL

Hitchcock fans should be reasonably happy with the content of this second pilot-issue of 'The MacGuffin', but I'm not sure about the rest of you. You may feel a little short-changed. Certainly you won't find any reviews of current or recent films this time around.

But, like I said, we're talking of a pilot-issue, and the problem is being addressed. Look for an altogether more inclusive, and more up-to-the-minute, newsletter starting with 'MacGuffin' 3.

Meanwhile, please lend your support in any way you can. Elsewhere in this issue you'll find details of how to subscribe. The annual fee of $12 Australian (4 issues) equals about $10 American. Not a lot to pay for what will accumulate into a considerable body of Hitchcock and other film lore.

In addition, as a subscriber you'll be part of our "friendly international group". Starting this issue, I'm offering tangible inducements for people to send in letters; and I will reward other contributors with one complimentary copy of 'The MacGuffin' per article used. Think about it - and act accordingly!

* * *

Speaking of contributors, thanks to Sarada Holt and Ronald Conway for their pieces in this issue. Sarada read Anthony Burgess's 'A Clockwork Orange' at school; her essay printed here gives us pointers to the structure of both the novel and Stanley Kubrick's film. In Ron's case, he took time off from his practice as a psychologist - and doubtless from celebrating his mention in the recent Australia Day Honours List - to share with us his appreciation of Freudian content in Hitchcock's films, especially Marnie. He makes a nice point about some of Hitchcock's tough ladies.

The other main Hitchcock article this time is a long analysis of the comedy-thriller Stage Fright (1949). You might want to check out the Warner video before, or after, you read the analysis.

Also, there's a review of a rather donnish book on the terror-film, 'Caligari's Children'. The title refers to the classic German silent film, The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, which proves to have an unexpected link with my favourite philosopher, Schopenhauer. The latter, so relevant to film generally and Hitchcock in particular, is mentioned a few times this issue. See 'Letters', for example.

* * *

Lately I've seen a couple of criticisms of old Alfred and his movies. One of them came in a letter, and suggested that any film about the topic of murder couldn't be very nice. Well, maybe not. But should I now think about giving up reading my favourite authors like Dickens, Flaubert, and Dostoevsky? The letter-writer didn't say.

And in a teen magazine someone complained that Hitchcock was a sadist. There's some truth in that, of course. Schopenhauer said that we're all constituted of self-interest, malice, and compassion. The thing is, the very fact of the sadism helps explain why the films themselves are often so fascinating. In the case of Stage Fright doesn't everyone identify with Alastair Sim when he tries to expose Marlene Dietrich in public as a murderess? (And with James Stewart in Rear Window when he tries to do the same to Raymond

Burr?) And what about some of Hitchcock's casting? Dietrich in Stage Fright plays a desperately world-weary theatrical star. It was surely not coincidental that she herself at that time had appeared in a succession of unsuccessful 40s pictures following her hey-day working for director Josef von Sternberg (The Blue Angel, The Scarlet Empress).

The writer in the teen magazine called French film critics' liking for Hitchcock an aberration, adding that France itself is a bit strange and has never produced a major rock star. (Come to that, nor has it produced many first-order classical composers.) But shouldn't he have spared a thought for all the great French novelists and painters?

Anyway, let me finish by thanking my friend Stephanie for her support over rather trying times lately. (That's not a reference to overseas events.) Peace, too, to all our SIG members and friends.

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Notes on copyright

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"Foreign copyright owners are protected in Australia and Australian copyright owners are protected in most other countries. To obtain the most extensive international protection available, the copyright notice should be placed on all copies of published works."

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LETTERS

Professor Don Cupitt, Cambridge, England

Thanks for your letter and copy of 'The MacGuffin'. It prompted a further thought. Schopenhauer's contrast between the Will and 'representation' is very strongly reflected in Hitchcock's type of auteur and genre cinema. For Hitchcock, what matters is the underlying emotional drive and tension of the thriller. The surface flux of visual images, human characters, etc. is subordinated to a very powerful noumenal, underlying force of which it is the mere expression or manifestation. Freud is of course very close to Schopenhauer and to Hitchcock on this point, making a similar contrast:

Will/representation : libido/mental images : cinematic narrative drive/edited visual imagery etc.

(Editor's note. I quite agree with Professor Cupitt. For schematic illustration of the Will at work in Hitchcock's movies just watch Saul Bass's driving credit-titles for North by Northwest, Psycho, The Birds, and Marnie. And for characters not comprehending the split between appearance and reality, the phenomenal and the noumenal, just think of the endings of films like Stage Fright, Vertigo, and all four of the above titles. Such characters typically stay bound in subjectivity - what Schopenhauer called "the principle of sufficient reason".)

* * *

Karim Gawor (Australian SIGs Co-ordinator), Surfers Paradise, Qld, Australia

Thanks for the newsletter. It looks great. It's the most professional effort I've seen. Lots of content, too. Good luck with the SIG.

* * *

Paul B. Priest, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

I saw Hitchcock's Psycho when I was twelve years old. I had to be accompanied by an adult so I took my mother. She proved to be useful for I covered my eyes whenever the music reached a fever pitch - a harbinger of a gory scene - and would ask her if it was safe to look. Since that time I haven't gone back to see the parts that I missed. Recently I saw a book dealing with the person Hitchcock based this movie on [name of Ed Gein - Ed.]. The cover sported a chilling photo of the real-life "Norman". I can tell you he is not the kind of person you would want to meet in a dark alley or a well-lit one for that matter.

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Letters needed!

Our Film/Alfred Hitchcock SIG is a correspondence-only, international group of film lovers, albeit a mixed one. It would be nice if we all knew something about each other's tastes and interests. To that end, you are asked to send:

(a) The title of your favourite film (or one of your favourite films)
(b) Ditto, your favourite Hitchcock film
(c) Ditto, the first Hitchcock film you ever saw - and something of the circumstances.

(For instance, one favourite film of mine is the French Claire's Knee - it's charming, limpid, and very sexy in a subtle way. My favourite Hitchcock film is Vertigo - I find it both profound and poignant. The first, or one of the first, Hitchcock films I saw was the James Stewart/Doris Day version of The Man Who Knew Too Much. I saw it at a local scout hall on 16mm gauge. The projector had to be stopped and re-threaded after each of the reels, and invariably the reel-breaks came in the most exciting parts.)

By a fortunate coincidence, it's 'MacGuffin' subscription time. So you'll be writing in anyway, no doubt! Depending on the number of letters received, I will give a prize for either the most interesting or the best-described answer to (c) above, or for the best letter on anything at all that arrives in time for the next issue.

This seems a good place to raise a couple of policy matters regarding letters generally. First, a letter writer's full address will not be published unless the writer requests it and the circumstances seem apt. Second, any letter received by me may be published, either in whole or in part, except when the writer asks me not to do so.

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BOOK REVIEW

Prawer, S.S.: 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' (O.U.P., 1980; hardcover)

The reputation of Oxford University Press as a publisher of film books has always been one of would-be respectability, not innovation. Its initial titles included 'American Silent Film' by the veteran film historian William Everson, 'Film Language' by noted French scholar Christian Metz, and 'A Discovery of Cinema' by Thorold Dickinson, the director of The Queen of Spades who had become a lecturer at London's Slade School. There was also 'The Oxford Companion to Film', but users rather felt that this failed to match its one-volume rivals (notably Ephraim Katz's 'The International Film Encyclopedia').

In the case of another early Oxford title, Professor Prawer's 'Caligari's Children', you at least find signs that its author meant it to break a few moulds. Typical of Prawer's approach to the terror-film is how he chooses to lump together Metropolis, Frankenstein, 2001 and the Russian Solaris on the grounds that with their "continuity between magic and science, between the incantations of the past and the technological wonders of present and future", they each evoke 'the uncanny'. (More on the uncanny in a moment.) He adds

that all four films "partake in an unmistakable fashion of the very essence of cinema", and in support he cites one of the earliest film theoreticians, Hugo Münsterberg:

> The photoplay tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination and emotion.

Well, I'm practically certain that this formulation lacks rigour. (As I understand the matter, there can be no ultimate distinction between outer and inner worlds, object and subject. The forms of space, time and causality rule both. Which is why the intriguing title in 2001, "... Beyond the Infinite", is at best only figurative.) Even so, in bandying around dubious or figurative notions, Prawer does manage an occasional insight. Which raises the question, 'How much insight?'

To answer that, we may turn to the book's central chapter on 'The Uncanny'. I'm happy to report that it's rich in quotation and allusion, for Prawer is nothing if not eclectic. He first states the twin concepts of Freud: the uncanny is either (a) the 'un-homely', that which makes you feel uneasy in the world of your normal experience, or (b) the 'un-secret', that which should have remained "mysterious, hidden, latent and has come to light" (as the philosopher Schelling put it). To be uncanny, Prawer says, a work need not provide shocks of horror: the uncanny may be diffused over the whole like the thick fogs or eerie light found in certain pages of Dickens or Gogol or Dostoevsky.

If that sort of allusion appeals to you, as it does to me (who can't get enough of it when it synthesises or summarises diverse areas of films viewed or books read), then enjoy! After discussing Freud, Prawer considers in turn the relevant contributions of psychiatrists, philosophers and theologians. Of the neo-Freudian Jacques Lacan's analysis of the 'disjunction' between lived experience and the mental sign which replaces it, and his stress on the Freudian concept of 'splitting' (easily symbolised in fiction by 'the double'), Prawer acknowledges a profound influence on the way critics now look at the tale of terror. Especially have those critics learned to examine the structure as well as the content of a novel or film. But Prawer adds: "I must admit that I myself have not found Lacan's writings helpful, and that I doubt whether his influence - so strong at the time of writing - will long outlast him." (Would my academic readers agree that Prawer is proving correct?)

Pointing out that many earlier observers before Freud (and Lacan) succeeded in uncovering the psychological springs of the uncanny, Prawer turns first to Arthur Schopenhauer:

> We need think only of Schopenhauer's celebrated analysis of the terror we feel when some apparent exception to the law of causality makes us doubt the principle of individuation ...

Schopenhauer himself called such terror dread. By coincidence, the general passage referred to is the very one I quoted in the last 'MacGuffin' when discussing Hitchcock's Vertigo. As examples of dread Schopenhauer cites occasions "when it appears some change has occurred without a cause, or a deceased person exists again; or when in any other way the past or the future is present, or the distant is near". All of which surely confirms why in Vertigo it's more than just the San Francisco fog that helps make the film such a memorable instance of the uncanny.

But I have now indicated the richest parts of Prawer's book and they comprise perhaps twenty pages of its overall 300. For the rest, there are chapters on individual films, chapters which seem to me to lack any special originality: films discussed are Rouben Mamoulian's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1931), Carl Dreyer's Vampyr (1931) and, naturally, Robert Wiene's trendsetting The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1919).

To write about Caligari, Prawer obtained a copy of the screenplay, something that the editors of the Lorrimer Classic Film Scripts had not been able to do a few years earlier when they ended up transcribing an archive print of the film. And, of course, Prawer's notes on Caligari and its "children" (descendents) contain plenty of useful material. I liked his note on the ambiguities introduced into the 1919 film by its added framing-story and by lines in the script itself (notably the Doctor's final remark: "At last I understand ... He thinks I am that mystic Caligari" - when clearly Francis does not think that at all). Nor would I question the link Prawer sees between Caligari's "small-town paranoia" and the "urban paranoia" of certain Hitchcock movies (The Lodger, Stage Fright?).

On the other hand, the further you advance into the book, the more you feel its general lack of direct engagement with the over 400 movies it mentions and tries to cover. With some exceptions (for example, a spirited apologia for Werner Herzog's 1979 Nosferatu), the author often seems to be working from old file cards, many of them containing obvious or clichéd comments. He deals too frequently in familiar generalities like the sexual analogues of vampire tales, and only rarely in real insights such as his note on the rise of 'vulgar' Hammer Films at the expense of 'tasteful' Ealing Studios.

Even though he strives to be comprehensive, and clearly thinks he has succeeded, Prawer still misses some important points. While mentioning the prominent role of games like chess and cards in the post-Caligari terror-film, he omits reference to the gambling motif/metaphor in films by Lang, Hitchcock and others. And for a book that spends so much time on the notion of the uncanny, it's strange that no connection is drawn between Caligari and the works of the German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann (whose 'The Sandman' was discussed by Freud and whose eerie character in that story, Coppelius, might almost be the spiritual prototype of Caligari himself; the physical prototype, as Prawer notes, was Schopenhauer, seen in a portrait made during the philosopher's old age).

All told, this is a rather long-winded and fairly typical O.U.P. film book. Best for libraries and specialist reference, I would have to say.

K.M.

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and clippings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

'Rear Window' wranglings

The Hitchcock film Rear Window, based on the 1942 short story called 'It Had To Be Murder', seems forever the subject of litigation. Recently, a literary agent who bought copyright in the story for $US650 after the author died, sued the film distributors and the film's part-owner, actor James Stewart. He alleged that the 1983 re-release of the film interfered with plans for a television version of the story. Now judges have ruled that the $US12 million profit from the film must be shared with the agent.

In the 70s Rear Window was shelved indefinitely after a man whom Hitchcock called an "ambulance chaser" (possibly the same literary agent) invoked an obscure copyright law and sued Hitchcock and Paramount Pictures for failing to respect a prohibition against screening a film based on a written work until the late author's estate was settled.

The latest ruling will have billion-dollar repercussions: there are thousands of films based on underlying copyright works, and before any of these is re-released lawyers will have to negotiate payment with the writer.

Literature into film

By a long chalk the most popular 'classic' author in contemporary cinema is Joseph Conrad, whose work contains a distinctive strain of pessimism. There have been at least twenty films made of Conrad's fiction since a silent version of Lord Jim in 1926; Hitchcock filmed 'The Secret Agent' in 1936 under the title Sabotage (A Woman Alone in the US). Now two more Conrad films are coming: Bob Hoskins's new version of The Secret Agent (with Hoskins both directing and starring) and David Lean's long, and long-awaited, Nostromo.

The runner-up to Conrad is E.M. Forster because - with next month's release of Where Angels Fear to Tread and the Merchant-Ivory team settling into production on Howard's End - there will be only one novel of his that hasn't been filmed, The Longest Journey.

Other films being made or in the recent-release category are a British-Soviet co-production of Virginia Woolf's Orlando; Edith Wharton's The Children (starring Ben Kingsley); a new version of Nabokov's Lolita; Roland Jaffe's film of Dominique Lapiere's The City of Joy (shooting in India); Michael Crichton's sophisticated SF novel, Jurassic Park; William Burroughs's The Naked Lunch (directed by David Cronenberg); and J.P. Donleavy's The Ginger Man.

Australian director Fred Schepisi's film of John le Carré's The Russia House, starring Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer, may get a release in the Soviet Union. In France, Henry Miller's Quiet Days in Clichy has been adapted, reportedly with great licence, by Claude Chabrol.

'F/X' and 'F/X 2': the Hitchcock connection

The 1985 F/X starred Australian actor Bryan Brown playing a special effects wizard who learns of an intended real-life assassination - his own.

The film was directed by Robert Mandel. Hitchcock buffs may recall that Mandel was one of three promising young film makers presented to Alfred Hitchcock in 1979 at the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award tribute held in Beverley Hills.

Now F/X 2 is being completed after shooting in Toronto, Canada. Bryan Brown again stars. But this time the director is another Australian, Richard Franklin (Psycho II).

In a letter, Richard tells us that his new film will contain "some Hitchcock pastiche".

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'A Clockwork Orange': an essay

(Editor's note. The following article refers principally to Anthony Burgess's novel but includes an assessment of Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film. A second article takes up some of the points raised.)

Futuristic societies in which people become passive and apathetic, and the government controls their every thought, had been portrayed before in such novels as 'Brave New World' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'. In 'A Clockwork Orange', set in an England of the near future, there is no totalitarian government but the beginnings of it are evident.

The principal character, 15-year-old Alexander de Large, is an anti-hero: a device Burgess also used in 'The Wanting Seed' published the same year as 'A Clockwork Orange' (1962). Both novels envision dystopias, worlds with terrible living conditions, but while the predominant problem in 'The Wanting Seed' is over-population, in 'A Clockwork Orange' it is an absence of law and humanity.

The anti-hero device may seem strange, but it takes us to the heart of Burgess's novel. Alex, who narrates, is corrupt, evil, and despicable, yet we learn to pity him. For a start, he is no ordinary thug but one who loves the music of Ludwig Van Beethoven. He steals, rapes, fights, and even murders, but when the government conditions him with its 'Ludovico technique' against these acts and against Beethoven's music, and he becomes helpless, the reader's anger is directed towards the government. 'Good' and 'evil' become inverted, and we find that stripping an individual of free will is worse than stealing and raping.

To this metaphysical element of his novel Burgess adds autobiographical ingredients. Alex's namesake, Mr Alexander, is writing a book called 'A Clockwork Orange', a piece of anti-government literature. Also, Burgess's wife died some time after being attacked by young criminals, as does Mr Alexander's wife after being attacked and raped by Alex and his 'droogs'.

The novel displays a strange formal geometry, as if every factor had been carefully plotted out and mirrored. Its three sections contain seven chapters each. The sections show, respectively, Alex sinning,

being treated, and returning to the outside world, where everyone he has committed a crime against takes revenge on him. For instance, Dim, one of his former droogs, and Billy Boy, his arch enemy during his street-fighting days, become policemen and beat him severely after they first rescue him from some intellectuals whose library he had once destroyed. But the novel's mirroring is also evidenced in the names 'Alex' and 'Mr Alexander', 'Ludwig Van' and 'Ludovico'.

If Mr Alexander represents Burgess, perhaps Alex does as well, as Burgess himself suggests: "It is the novelist's innate cowardice that makes him depute to imaginary personalities the sins he is too cautious to commit himself". But as we've seen, Alex suffers. The same music of Beethoven that had once delighted him and filled him with violent imaginings makes him sick after the Ludovico treatment, for the doctors had played Beethoven in the background as they showed him gruesome films and fed him drugs to induce nausea.

All of this is graphically depicted in Stanley Kubrick's film version, which captures much of the spirit of the novel. The film, though, omits the novel's last chapter, as does the American edition of the book. That chapter deals with Alex's growing up after he recovers from the Ludovico treatment and considers starting his own family.

Burgess and most critics prefer the uncut version of the book, for in that final chapter may be found the quality that defines a novel: the principal character exhibits some kind of change. Although Alex had changed earlier in the book, that was artificially induced, and when he was released from his conditioning he appeared to return to his old ways. The last chapter allows us to see how Alex decides that "ultra-violence" has lost its appeal. Free will has triumphed over forced choice, and the individual over the government.

Meanwhile, for the rest of us, faced with determining our own moral choices, the mechanics of politics and religion continue to tick away, making each of us a part of the one giant clockwork orange that is the world.

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The ending of 'A Clockwork Orange'

Has anyone taken a close look at the ending of Kubrick's film lately? Or, for that matter, at the ending of Burgess's novel (the American edition, the one used by Kubrick)? For I want to question whether either of them really leaves the way open for free will to triumph, whatever the novel's added chapter may seem to indicate.

In other words, I want to suggest that the added chapter is either 'tagged-on' (perhaps to satisfy the British publisher) or has been misinterpreted, even by Sarada Holt whose perceptive article appears above. Sarada says that "Burgess and most critics prefer the uncut version of the book" but that's not what I once heard. I was told that it's a let-down. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? Any "change" in Alex so late in the story is going to look contrived. Unless, that is, the change reads as the final stage in the Ludovico treatment - just as at the end of Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' Winston Smith returns brain-washed to 'society', more abject than ever ...

Both 'A Clockwork Orange' and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' are about social isolates, and I will press the parallels between the two novels in a moment. Meanwhile, here are my thoughts on the ending of Kubrick's film.

To begin with, just because young Alex pronounces himself "cured" (of the effects of the Ludovico treatment), why should we believe him? The image we see of well-dressed men and women applauding a naked, romping couple is obviously Alex's fantasy, not reality, for all that it marks the return of his libido. But libido, sexuality, may itself be a trap, as sociologist Michel Foucault has often warned us ...

Next, I am reminded by the film's ending of poet William Blake's ambivalent portrayal of Satan:

Spectre of Albion! warlike Fiend!
In clouds of blood and ruin rolled,
I here reclaim thee as my own,
My Selfhood - Satan armed in gold!

For Blake, Satan always represented the isolated ego cut off from the universe that is "One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination". (And 'Albion' was Blake's poetic name for Britain.) In similar fashion, Alex in 'A Clockwork Orange' is a completely anti-social being, someone whom the film's imagery likens to a vampire who preys each night on his crippled or weakened victims. One critic rightly called him "evil personified". Accordingly, to attribute to such a figure the possibility of free will, while in theory it might not be false theology, strikes me as either a slighting of the 'poetic' concept involved or as suddenly wrenching that concept into a wholly new mode (to satisfy the novel's final chapter). And if the latter, how can there be a "triumph" of free will? More like a contradiction - an imposition by the author from above.

And again, even if it's granted that Alex has been cured after a fashion - libido restored, and able once more to relish the music of his beloved Ludwig Van - we must surely observe how this has diminished him. He has been bought off. His former fight has been quelled or trivialised, and he has made a dubious pact with his worst enemy (who long ago supplanted Billy Boy) - the State.

Certainly Blake would now disown him. Instead of a glorious Satan waiting to be incorporated into a truer vision, the end of Kubrick's film (I suggest) is really showing us a pathetic, self-deluding teenager still clinging to delusions of glory. Someone has pulled a plug and the 'poetry' has been drained from him. No triumph this - except for Kubrick's excellent timing in concluding his film just at this point.

* * *

Not only is Alex anti-social, he is a practising sadist. In this respect, his character stands out until the end of the film from the sublimated or displaced sadism around him (e.g. the Cat Lady, the prison procedures). Almost inevitably, the story tends toward 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'. But more than that, I think both works are alike in illustrating the modern "Faustian pact" to which Foucault says we are tempted by our rulers and their very potent institutions:

> We must not think that by saying yes to sex, one says no to power; on the contrary, one tracks along the course laid out by the general deployment of sexuality.

For instances of how institutions may control and manipulate us, look at such works by Foucault as 'The History of Sexuality' and 'Discipline and Punish'. Then turn back to 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and 'A Clockwork Orange' and note the parallels. There are many. But also note that both novels are themselves allegories of such control. For instance, what finally allows Winston's torturer, O'Brien, to break him down, is bringing him against an instance of his own potential sadism. After that, Winston is easily persuaded to love that ultimate abstraction, Big Brother ...

Here's how I see the matter. If it is Winston's sexuality which betrays him into the government's power - and the whole novel points that way - then I believe the same is also the case with Alex in 'A Clockwork Orange'. Roughly equivalent to O'Brien is the nice-seeming man Alex likes to call the Minister of the Inferior. But don't be fooled. For if you really think that the government has capitulated to Alex in the film's last scene, then you'll believe anything, oh my brothers ...

K.M.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Cinema in Asia; the real-life cases that Hitchcock filmed; books (e.g. 'Acting in the Cinema', 'The Hitchcock Romance').

Plus, as always, whatever the editor receives: short items and reviews especially welcome.

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Back-issues are available for $5 Australian per copy, including air postage overseas. ($3 per copy within Australia.) NB: the inaugural 'MacGuffin' included two articles on Hitchcock's Vertigo plus an account of the director filming Family Plot.

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Hitchcock's Disturbed People

Alfred Hitchcock was always fascinated by the motivations of his characters and it was not true that he treated actors as would a master puppeteer. Within the carefully planned and story-boarded method he preferred, Hitchcock encouraged his cast to play as resourcefully and in as nuanced a manner as possible. This was true of his disturbed characters in particular, right back to Oscar Homolka's ambiguous Verloc, the saboteur in Sabotage (1936). Other examples appear in the exaggerated deadly calm of Judith Anderson as Mrs Danvers in Rebecca (1940) and Robert Walker's boyish jocularity as Bruno, the intending parricide, in Strangers on a Train (1951).

Psychiatry, particularly Freudian psychoanalysis, was a strong interest of Hitchcock and we know that he was well read in the area. Yet only Spellbound (1944) is actually constructed around psychoanalysis as a full-blown theme. Here there is a fascinating interplay between the young psychiatrist Constance (Ingrid Bergman), her teacher Alex (Michael Chekhov), the pseudo-psychiatrist (Gregory Peck) and the coolly arrogant head of Green Manors Sanatorium, Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll). Alex conforms to the stereotype of the sort of psychoanalyst the audience is anticipating. He is bearded (like Freud), sardonically quizzical and humorous, and easily notes, without saying so, the essence of the relationship between his pupil Dr Constance and the obviously disturbed "Dr Anthony Edwardes". We soon realise that Edwardes is desperate and on the edge of a catatonic breakdown but we trust Constance's faith that he is not a murderer. Yet both her chief, Dr Murchison, and old Dr Alex keep us in some doubt as to how right her view really is. Perhaps Edwardes was really a killer in an unintended accident? And of course he was - in childhood.

There is, of necessity, a drastic telescoping of young Edwardes's treatment and his progress towards the truth. Conventional treatment rarely proceeds so rapidly or so fascinatingly. Nor does the mental defence system of a real patient yield up its secrets so dramatically. But such is Hitchcock's skill at building tension and keeping us wondering that we believe strongly in the truth of the process. Meanwhile the final twist where Murchison is revealed as the real paranoiac murderer and "Edwardes" merely an innocent general physician is delayed long enough to surprise us.

In Strangers on a Train psychiatry plays no direct role but in Bruno (played with an edgy, alarming charm by Walker) we encounter a character disturbed yet clever enough to embroil a sane young man, Guy (Farley Granger), in his murder plot. Bruno is clearly a pre-psychotic homosexual with a classical oedipal

fixation. As critic Donald Spoto has noted, Guy and Bruno represent the "light and dark" aspects of each other. When they first meet, it is Guy who seems worldly and confident, while Bruno is coy, introverted and diffident. Before long, the balance of confidence is reversed and the power of Bruno to mesmerise Guy (an affianced heterosexual) is sufficiently connected with Guy's inner weakness (and possible bisexuality) to bring an innocent bystander into part-complicity with a killer. The intermingling of male sexuality and pathology in this film is the better done for being subject to the taboos of the old Hollywood Production Code. A modern remake would probably have Bruno make a pass at Guy! As for Guy himself, we have already had a clearer version of the morally compromised, ambiguous relationships of his type to other men in the character of Philip in Rope (1948), again played by Farley Granger.

The oedipal theme of a son partly or wholly emasculated by his mother reaches a shocking climax in Psycho (1960). It was not surprising that many clinical workers at the time objected to the film for its possible destructive effect upon disturbed young male viewers. The linking of the unwholesome oedipal love to necrophilia, with a mummified parent in the basement, is the stuff of true nightmare. Especially when one considers the role played by the mother in the life of her children in days before women's liberation arrived to act as a domestic pressure valve. But in many ways Psycho stands as much as a warning about the brinkwomanship practised by aggressive women as about men. Marion (Janet Leigh) and Lila (Vera Miles) are both women with potentially emasculating qualities. Marion robs her employer, and her love affair with Sam Loomis is underlined at the beginning as potentially hazardous for him. The large physique of John Gavin as Sam is belied by the obvious vulnerability (out of bed) of the character he plays. Lila is latently even more predatory, and director Richard Franklin further developed her forceful character in Psycho II. At the film's centre however is the gentle Norman Bates who kills at the behest of his "mother-half". "Mother" is shown as the only ultimately "virile" aspect of a tragically castrated son peeping through holes in walls at what he cannot permit himself to have. Simon Oakland's psychiatric exposition of Norman's dual nature at the end of the film could have seemed a trite device but in Hitchcock's hands it comes off beautifully.

Marnie (1964), the last of Hitchcock's films on an overtly clinical theme, is in many ways the least-esteemed. Such low regard is hardly justified as Tippi Hedren plays the sexually frigid kleptomaniac heroine to near-perfection. Her cool statuesque blonde looks are in brilliant contrast to the dark, saturnine eroticism of Mark Rutland played by Sean Connery. Interestingly, both the sexual aversions of Marnie and the sexual arrogance of Mark tend not to make them very sympathetic figures. Yet in none of his films has Hitchcock explored the theme of sexual psychopathology more expertly and less sensationally. Marnie's reactions to men are entirely credible to a practising professional where the syndromes of "Dr Edwardes" in Spellbound and of Norman in Psycho sometimes strain one's credulity.

Marnie is the child of a man-hating former prostitute who once involved her amnesiac daughter in the murder of a dangerously aggressive sailor. Marnie's fear of red (blood), her curious reaction to the death of her horse, her compulsion to steal from employers who have treated her generously, her life-threatening struggle to accept Mark, all fit into the complex pattern of her psychiatric history. Thus Marnie may not be Hitchcock's most popular heroine but in terms of characterisation she is surely one of the most sophisticated. The film itself is crisp and humanly elegant throughout - despite all complaints of clumsy back-projection and the like - and shows the director in his best form as the master psychologist.

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Do you know about the Video SIG?

Mensa video buffs, especially those whose television uses the 525-lines American system, should think about joining the American VidSIG. Newsletter (4/yr) costs $4 (North America) or $6 (foreign). Sample $1.50. For swapping videos and/or information. Write to Dale Watson, 3987 Bainbridge Dr., Sharonville, OH 45241-2601.

Two more SIGs you might join are the Writers' SIG whose newsletter, 'Calliope', is edited by Donna Bocian, 3905 N. Panama Ave, Chicago IL 60634; and the Bibliophile SIG whose co-ordinator (and editor of 'BookworMs') is Lisa Beglinger, 3208 Rogers Ave, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. More SIGs information next time.

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Best of 1990

Martin Scorsese's GoodFellas was mentioned by most critics. Here's what Melbourne media lecturer and film critic, Tom Ryan, said of his first two choices for best feature film in 1990:

> "Two outstanding American films - Martin Scorsese's magnificent GoodFellas, perhaps the best gangster film ever made, and Brian De Palma's ferocious Casualties of War, vastly superior to the confused Born on the Fourth of July, would deserve acknowledgement in any year. Both are extremely violent, constantly unsettling in the way they draw us into their nightmare worlds (even if GoodFellas is also very funny). And both strike a discordant note in a year in which most of the film released, whatever their merits or failings, seems to have assiduously avoided making us feel uncomfortable."

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Hitchcock's 'Stage Fright': an appreciation

[Synopsis of the film. A student at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Eve Gill (Jane Wyman), endeavours to clear a handsome chorus-dancer, Jonathan Cooper (Richard Todd), of suspicion of murder; simultaneously, she tries to make the police suspect Jonathan's mistress, the music-hall star, Charlotte Inwood (Marlene Dietrich). But the unexpected happens. Perhaps because of a hunch, Eve finds herself shifting her romantic allegiance from Jonathan to the gentlemanly Detective Smith (Michael Wilding). Events climax in a theatre, after which it appears that at least one character has gained a new maturity.]

(a) Seeing illusions

Hitchcock's visit to England in 1949 to make Stage Fright coincided with the publication there of 'The Concept of Mind' by philosopher Gilbert Ryle. That now-classic book states as its central proposition what is almost a film maker's, or a film actor's, credo: the mind is part of the body's activity. Therefore, any mental event should be witnessable.[1]

Stage Fright appears to bear out the implications of this. For instance, Ryle implies that self-knowledge means quite literally watching oneself and one's 'performance'. Here's how the Stage Fright screenplay describes its heroine, Eve Gill:

> Loving acting and the theatre before all else, she is apt to view everything in an overly-dramatic light. She feels all the world's a stage, and, come hell or high water, she's going to act on it! In "Stage Fright" she gets a chance to do just that, and in so doing she really grows up ... [learning] that adventure in the mind or behind the footlights is much easier than in actuality!

In other words, Eve must be chastened for her initial too-fanciful view of things. Ryle's comment might easily be the exception he allows concerning mind-body unity: "much of our ordinary thinking is conducted in internal monologue or silent soliloquy ...". Note the theatrical metaphors. The small importance[2] Ryle attaches to "ordinary thinking" appears to give it the status of a mere rehearsal: definitely not that of an actual performance or something done in the real world.

So when Stage Fright shows Eve speaking lines to herself and in other ways preparing (i.e. rehearsing) for her big scene which takes place in a theatre, you sense an affinity: Hitchcock and Ryle. I'll come back to it. The point for now is that at the climax, egged on by her loving father-cum-critic (Alastair Sim), Eve makes all the right responses. Though the scene doesn't exactly occupy centre stage, Eve's triumph is still a middling one ...

As for the film's spectators, Hitchcock asks us to remember that the cinema isn't reality, either. The best that the medium can offer us is a run-through of what it takes to be more human or more alive. That is, we are put in the learning position Eve occupies for most of Stage Fright. At the start of the film, a theatre safety curtain rises to disclose not a stage but a view of 'real' London - a clear hint that appearances may be fabricated. And at the end, a similar safety curtain, suddenly lowered, causes the death of the film's

most passive character. For neither the first nor the last time in Hitchcock, we find we have been watching an allegory about the dangers of merely watching.

(b) Mere players

I had better note here my agreement with those of Stage Fright's commentators who say that the film is more interesting for its abundant ideas, and the light these throw on Hitchcock's other movies, than it is for its sometimes languid screenplay and its indifferent villains (who, as Hitchcock himself pointed out, aren't the masterful ones of his best work). Even so, the reason for discussing the film here is that it's still one of the director's quintessential works, one that looks both back and forward: to his populous English comedy-thrillers of the 30s, and to the thematically richer, more pessimistic American films of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. I urge readers of 'The MacGuffin' who haven't seen it to track it down.

Incidentally, I'll try in this article not to give away the villains' precise identity. And, as I've been able to consult both the unpublished studio screenplay (already quoted) and the original novel, I may indicate points of interest in these as we go along.

Now, arguably the key to Stage Fright is that everybody is acting, some more bravely than others. The safety curtain that rises at the start bears an image of Minerva, helmeted goddess of the arts. That image pointedly resembles Marlene Dietrich. We've seen how the screenplay describes Eve; here's how it refers to Dietrich's character, the inscrutable lady of the theatre, Charlotte Inwood:

> A strikingly attractive woman with many sides to her nature. She is a very successful musical comedy star, who, on the stage, can make her audience roll in the aisles with a comic song. Off stage, her sultry sort of beauty and slightly flashy mannerisms keep one guessing about her true personality.

Although the film hints that Charlotte has almost reached the end of her tether (note, for instance, her ambiguous line, "I can't go on"), she keeps an admirable composure until near the climax. For mixed reasons, Eve pursues her, even posing (i.e. acting) as a maid in Charlotte's house in order to try and obtain incriminating evidence.

Further, the film makers appear to have drawn material for Charlotte's character from the real-life Thompson/Bywaters murder case heard at the Old Bailey in 1922. Young Edward Bywaters was accused of murdering Edith Thompson's husband, the Crown alleging that Bywaters and Mrs Thompson had been lovers. What quickly made the press take more than its customary interest in the case was the appearance and demeanour of Mrs Thompson in court. Although she had led the outward life of a suburban housewife, her courtroom manner was that of the theatrical star. What is more, she carried off her performance superbly. Everyone in court who saw her, from the reporters to the barristers, felt a special atmosphere like that of a play or opera, and noted Mrs Thompson's remarkable propensity to switch from one role to another depending on who she was addressing.[3] When in Stage Fright Eve first encounters Charlotte, who is trying on a mourning-veil as people come and go in her room, the screenplay emphasises how "Charlotte plays many parts, and switches from one to another according to the person she's speaking with". Not surprisingly, it's one of the film's best scenes.

For years after the Thompson/Bywaters case, books and plays inspired by it kept being published. Among them, almost certainly, should be included the 1948 novel, 'Man Running', by screenwriter-turned-novelist, Selwyn Jepson. (The novel twice alludes to the trial.) Hitchcock bought the film rights to the novel and proceeded to turn it into Stage Fright.

Naturally he followed his usual procedure: taking from the book just what he needed, intensifying or adding to that, and discarding the rest. In the case of Stage Fright he gave the film its theatrical bias. Although the novel's Charlotte is a celebrated actress - with a portrait of herself "at a thousand guineas the square foot" hanging in her library to prove it - Eve is not a drama student. She is simply a well-off young lady who lives in an isolated Suffolk farmhouse with her invalid father. In almost total contrast to the book, the film is shot through with both overt and covert references to the theatre.

Something else that is largely of the film's making is the implicit Eve-Charlotte rivalry. Its most obvious aspect is that both women fancy the same young man, Jonathan, who has been Charlotte's lover (as Bywaters had been Edith Thompson's). We may also recognise youthful ambition imputing to the older person knowledge of the life and wisdom it so zealously seeks. Which is the All About Eve syndrome: a tiro actress understudying the worldly star, secretly hoping to supplant her some day. While there's no question of Hitchcock's having yet seen Joseph Mankiewicz's film, which in 1949 was even then being made, it's possible that he had read the original short story, 'The Wisdom of Eve', which appeared in 'Cosmopolitan'' for May, 1946.

Again, there's the subtle snobbery of Eve, a student at R.A.D.A., pitting herself against Charlotte, the music hall star. The legitimate theatre versus vaudeville. This piquant aspect of Eve and Charlotte's rivalry shades into one more aspect, the characteristic Hitchcockian opposition of city and country. Eve commutes to London by sports car from a modest dwelling on the Essex Flats near the Thames Estuary. Charlotte lives in her plush mansion in Mayfair. The suggestion of class distinction is both suitably 'English' and in line with how in film after film Hitchcock's villains have 'arrived'; often the latter show considerably more taste and aplomb than the brash or callow heroine or hero who would oppose them.

* * *

Eve and Charlotte are not the only characters whose actions are 'theatrical', whether performed on or off the stage. Throughout the film, life and theatre reflect each other. Consider the emphases I've given the following description of some key scenes.

Charlotte's principal maid, Nellie Goode, is the person who sees Jonathan fleeing the scene of the murder; soon she is regaling her pub-mates with boasts of how she'll "be a star witness at the trial". And when Eve takes Nellie's place, she immediately disobeys directions from Groves, the butler, oversteps her mark, and goes to Charlotte's room unannounced; Groves comes after her and in a stage whisper - for the benefit of the film audience - angrily tells her, "I thought I told you to wait downstairs".

Next follows the scene where Charlotte tries on mourning-clothes (i.e. one more costume). On Eve's introducing herself as "Doris Tinsdale", she receives the reprimand, "Not so loud, dear", as if she were back at the Academy, rehearsing. However, Charlotte quickly finds her a part, telling her to be ready to introduce the doctor when Charlotte gives her a cue by coughing. During this scene Charlotte keeps forgetting her new maid's name - despite some prompting from Eve. And when, as bidden, Eve goes into the next room to await the arrival of the doctor, the ensuing action is photographed as if from the wings of a theatre. There, Eve hovers as if she were suffering from the titular stage fright, for she fears being recognised by Detective Smith who is interviewing Charlotte after having earlier met the real Eve in the pub.

The film is full of this sort of thing. Instances of it, some more blatant than others, illustrate what one critic has called the film's "duplicitous text" - lies within lies, a whirlpool of unfathomed appearances. At another level, the theatrics simply refer to the idea that the world's a stage and we are part of the melodrama enacted on it.

I use the word 'melodrama' advisedly. That honourable theatrical form is evoked on several occasions, not least by the use of music and musical interludes. Commodore Gill has an expressive way with a piano-accordion, as when he plays 'Hearts and Flowers' for an early scene between Eve and Jonathan. Later, Detective Smith gives a soothing rendition of a Chopin Ballade on the piano. Charlotte's stage numbers include 'The Laziest Gal in Town' - which looks like a comment on the casting-couch syndrome.

Then, too, apposite to everything we've been considering, there's the film's Theatrical Garden Party ...

(c) The Theatrical Garden Party

This is where the film brings together all its main characters - with a significant exception - plus some notable 'bit' players (Joyce Grenfell, young Patricia Hitchcock), and pertinently defines the 'Englishness'

that has been another part of its design. Crucial to the concept is the rain. It's not improbable that Hitchcock thought of the latter after remembering the popular Ealing production, It Always Rains on Sunday, which his friend Angus MacPhail had helped script two years before. At any rate, I would question actress Jane Wyman's recent claim that the film makers merely took advantage of some passing showers on the day of shooting.[4] The studio screenplay fully treats the rain idea and, moreover, shows no sign of last-minute revisions - although such revisions occur on several other pages.

The rain makes everyone 'bear up'. Seen in conjunction with the fact that the occasion is a war orphans' benefit (which the theatrical profession is organising and sponsoring), it carries a strong reminder of the recent past. Another reminder of that past, and of the London blitz in particular, opened the film: as the safety curtain slowly rose, it disclosed St Paul's Cathedral standing defiantly amidst a wasteland of rubble.

Into this context, then, Joyce Grenfell's memorable cameo ("Lovely ducks") fits perfectly. I shan't spell out the implications of it. It's sufficient to note that with her uniquely cheery grin and undismayed headmistress's voice, Grenfell is a perfect foil for that other, more phlegmatic, English eccentric, Alastair Sim - who is soon literally spilling his own blood for the common cause.

The ruse of the bloodstained doll is a device for catching out Charlotte Inwood's conscience, and is Stage Fright's most theatrical gesture of all - straight from 'Hamlet'. Of course, like most ideas of the characters in the film, it doesn't work out as intended. Even the Commodore must proceed by trial and error, rehearsal and performance. Yet his ruse does have significant results.

For the garden party is also where Charlotte finally breaks down in public. As her charity performance nears its climax, she finds herself confronted by a calculated reminder of her late husband's murder. I suspect that her shock comes as much from the gesture's callousness as from her enforced confrontation with her own fear and guilt. (Nor would I put it past Hitchcock that he was consciously playing on the irony of the 'charity' involved.) But neither the Commodore nor Eve, nor for that matter the film audience, notices anything of this at the time. Instead a more paranoid logic is at work. In a scene where everyone else down to a diminutive cub-scout with an umbrella is being so resourceful and plucky, Charlotte becomes the German woman who lets 'our' side down.

By the same logic, the absence of Jonathan from the scene acquires significance of its own. In the novel, he mentions how "I had a difficult war ... rather more mental as well as physical strain ... than some chaps had to take". The screenplay follows this up: "His handsome face seems immature ... and a trifle weak". Hence excluding him from the garden party leaves him in the 'un-tried' (i.e. non-performing) category, and sets him apart. With just the theatre climax to follow, we've already taken sides, whether we know it or not.

I've said little of the garden party's swirling, ebullient feel which anticipates the more raucous fairground of Strangers on a Train. Nor about how it works to consolidate Eve's new-found feelings towards Detective Smith. But those things are also deftly managed. Altogether, the garden party is one of Hitchcock's finest set-pieces to that time.

(d) Signs of life

Stage Fright contains elements that link it to such earlier Hitchcock movies as Young and Innocent (similar stop-at-nothing heroines) and The Paradine Case (similar inscrutable 'villainesses'). But as I've indicated, it also anticipates Hitchcock films to come, and in this respect once again several ingredients stand out.

I began by invoking philosopher Gilbert Ryle's concept of the unity of mind and body. An identical concept had been held by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), who concluded that self-knowledge comes from seeing what we do. Experience is all. Which is a basic enough tenet of Stage Fright. But when, in addition, you take Ryle's insistence that in theory all mental events are witnessable, you have a credo for film makers which is distinctly Hitchcockian. Again and again, Hitchcock said that he must fill the tapestry, charge the screen with emotion. As much as anything else, this meant winkling out inner states for our inspection.

Hitchcockian-type acting emphasises body language no less than 'verbal' performance. It isn't opposed to the theatrical type of acting, but is merely a more nuanced form of it, taking full advantage of editing and camera techniques. And as good stage actors and producers know, such acting succeeds best when the on-stage energy level is greatest. Put simply, the more life, the more communication. Or, with Gilbert Ryle in mind: the more signs of life, the more communication of mental events.

Now, a summit of Hitchcockian-type acting is surely Cary Grant's serio-comic performance as ad-man Roger Thornhill in North by Northwest (1959). Physical, supple, and witty, it constantly takes you by surprise. Here I always think of Grant's knee-jerk towards the door when he learns enemy spies are on their way up from the hotel lobby. His body/mind outruns by several micro-seconds his verbal response (a minimalist "They are?"). It's only fitting that he soon says, "I never felt more alive".

A related point concerns how North by Northwest, whatever its expensive, if intermittent, outdoors look, is really one of Hitchcock's most theatrical entertainments.[5] Overall, it's like a musical or a fairy tale. Particularly relevant to Stage Fright is how its characters lead charmed lives, and mentally inhabit a world that exists at least one remove from everyday reality. (For instance, a running gag is that Grant keeps getting away with breaking one law or ordinance after another.) So much so, that the chief spy (James Mason) ends up complaining to the police, "That wasn't very sporting of you, using real bullets." Immediately one thinks of the fatal 'safety' curtain in Stage Fright

* * *

Eve Gill also leads a charmed life. If her father occasionally indulges a fondness for small-scale smuggling, she spends much of the film engaged in false pretences or worse. (In the novel, someone goes so far as to tell her, "You've broken every law in the criminal calendar, as far as I can see.") So its appropriate that she finally confronts the now demented villain in a fairy-tale carriage in a theatre props bay. And must step back out of the carriage - a fateful moment which Hitchcock emphasises with pixillated slow-motion - if she is to return to the unglamorous 'real' world.

Now we can sum up. With its constant theatrics, Stage Fright predates the use of a similar formula in North by Northwest by a decade. In the later film the theatrics are referred to as "games", as when Mason again complains, "Games? Must we?" And the formula for both films runs something like this: laws = symbols of inhibition; theatrics/games = overcoming inhibitions; the hero/heroine's actions = self-growth within a protective fantasy (such as Eve's conviction that all the world's a stage for her to act on); the finale = return to reality (and probably the inhibitions: self-knowledge doesn't mean licence).

(e) Riddles

Some final thoughts. If in Stage Fright Charlotte and Jonathan are in some measure Edith Thompson and Edward Bywaters of the real-life murder case, the film follows post-trial thinking that Mrs Thompson may not have been fairly dealt with by the judge. (The novel takes a different slant again, for there the murderer is neither Charlotte nor Jonathan but Charlotte's manager, the depraved Freddie Williams.)

In keeping, too, with Hitchcock's customary even-handed view of guilt, not to mention of what generally passes as reality, he allows both Charlotte and Jonathan their respective curtain speeches. Jonathan's speech is rattled, Charlotte's the more deeply considered, but both contain a measure of explanation that gives the lie to our earlier paranoid feelings. In what is almost a throwaway line, we even learn that the late Mr Inwood was himself far from blameless. "He was an abominable man", Charlotte muses. Then she adds a last, unfathomable note: "Why do women marry abominable men?"

As for Eve, after her big adventure what has she really learnt? The film's last shot, of Eve and Smith walking away from us down a backstage corridor, suggests that for the time being she has found her place. But the image isn't wholly innocent. Pools of light suggest footlights. Turn to the screenplay, and a scene not used in the actual film, and there we find that Eve could hardly wait to go back to R.A.D.A. and shout stagy lines like, "There is nothing left but happiness ... For us alone." Watching from the wings, fiancé Smith feels (we are told) "some lack of appreciation for these sentiments".

Wasn't it Schopenhauer who said that a person's character never changes?

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Notes

1. Compare: "Ryle ... held that ... all references to the mental must be understood in terms of, at least theoretically, witnessable activities." (Columbia Encyclopedia)

2. Compare: "[Ryle's] thesis allows the existence of inner processes but minimizes their importance." (A.J. Ayer, 'Philosophy in the Twentieth Century')

3. Author Max Pemberton, whose book, **'Stranger Than Fiction', was published in 1947, writes there of Edith Thompson: "Those who saw her at the Central Criminal Court - of whom I was one - perceived in her such frequent and amazing changes of mood and manner that we imagined the whole story of her life could be read in them."**

4. The claim is made in the film, Hitchcock: The Thrill of Genius, shown at the Melbourne Film Festival in 1987.

5. Theatrical? Outdoors? Well, for a start, think of the crop-dusting scene as something scripted by Samuel Beckett ('Waiting for Godot', etc.)!

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ODD SPOT: MULTIPLE VERTIGO

Most Hitchcock followers know that his dizzying 1958 film, Vertigo, starring James Stewart and Kim Novak, was 're-made' as Obsession by Brian De Palma in 1976.

For his leads, De Palma cast two adequate performers, Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold. The Italian city of Florence substituted nicely for San Francisco. Vertigo composer Bernard Herrmann wrote a new score but, like De Palma's film itself, it proved to be bombastic where the original had been subtle and plangent.

Even so, the 1976 film was more exciting than a second re-make: an unauthorised 'copy' shown on Australian television in the early 80s. Called The Illusion, this was an Egyptian feature which went so far as to imitate Hitchcock's cartooned dream-sequence. The principal city had become Alexandria, and a lighthouse stood in for the bell tower.

It was a tawdry imitation, though.

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'The MacGuffin' is the newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock SIG (Special Interest Group), authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individual persons only. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. For details, see inside. All correspondence should be sent to the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 3 May, 1991 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £2.50

EDITORIAL

First, a welcoming message to new readers. If you even half-way like what you see in this issue, perhaps you'll recommend us to your film buff friends. We're a growing concern, but it's safe to say that the growth will take a little while.

In the meantime, I guess that leaves the rest of us on a moderately cosy basis. Which is my nice way of saying that subscriptions, and accompanying letters, haven't been as numerous lately as I'd hoped. But thanks to those of you who did write. You know who you are. People like Don Gilbert in Illinois. Don sent in a review from the 'Chicago Tribune' of a new novel by noted author Stanley Elkin. The book's title? 'The MacGuffin'!

As the review explains, a MacGuffin is Alfred Hitchcock's term for something that exists solely to move along the plot. Elkin suggests it could be "whatever got slipped into Cary Grant's pocket ... or that Jimmy Stewart picked up by mistake when the girl switched briefcases on him". Yes, and let's recall that our newletter is aptly named 'The MacGuffin' if it facilitates our enjoyment of watching movies.

So ... some good news. We've several new contributors this issue. To those of you who already know Irene Radek from reading her lively film column in the Mensa 'International Journal', she needs no introduction. But did you also know that Irene writes for the Canadian Mensa magazine 'MC^2', where she doubles as its Entertainment Editor? She's a genuine film enthusiast with a wealth of experience - and I'm elated that she will be contributing 'Radek Reviews' regularly to these pages.

Also in this issue is an authoritative introduction to books available in English on the Japanese cinema. Its written by an academic, Freda Freiberg, who is no stranger to film archives around the world, including Japan. (For readers who'd like an introduction to Indian cinema and the books available, there's a thumb-nail sketch of that topic in our 'Film Reviews' section, which this issue is devoted to Asian films.)

And my thanks to Lisa Beglinger, editor of 'BookworMs', the newsletter of the American Mensa Bibliophile SIG. From that publication I've 'lifted' Lisa's review of 'Hooked' by critic Pauline Kael. It seemed fitting to do so in the light of Ms Kael's recently-announced retirement (see 'News').

Hitchcock fans are catered for by two items: a review of Lesley Brill's fascinating book, 'The Hitchcock Romance', and the first of an occasional series of articles on real-life murder cases that inspired Hitchcock films - this time the Jack the Ripper case and Hitchcock's silent classic, The Lodger.

* * *

In the first 'MacGuffin' I said that our newsletter has minimal philosophy, and gave my reasons (among them, my wariness of abstract principles). I think that's still true, but in preparing this issue I've noticed a certain editorial tendency which I'll try and share with you. In a word, it's this. I prefer filmmakers, and critics, to acknowledge and respect the reality of the world, rather than turn their backs on it. Fine, you say. But what is that reality? Well, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, I think it involves what Hitchcock (in talking of people's complacency in The Birds) called "the catastrophe that surrounds us all".

For instance, you've probably noticed that May has been a particularly bad month for natural disasters - so

much so, that organisers of relief appeals have been talking of "compassion fatigue". But such disasters represent only a small part of the human - and animal - suffering that occurs every day. What I'm trying to say in limited space is that realism seems to me akin to what the great writer Thomas Hardy called "pessimism", namely, "what is really only a reasoned view ... deduced from facts unflinchingly observed". And it involves precisely the acknowledgement of reality I mentioned above. I think it's Hitchcock's brand of realism, as it was the philosopher Schopenhauer's - and I think it's exemplary.

* * *

Enough of that. As you read this 'MacGuffin' you may see its application to some of the points made. Write and let me know your views. And note that Irene Radek would also like to hear from you about her column.

Our next issue will feature Psycho. It should break new ground. Now, I hear there's a new book out about the making of Psycho. Though I haven't seen it yet, I'd welcome receiving a review - say, just a few lines of description and a general impression. Any takers?

Finally, a note to overseas subscribers or, rather, intending overseas subscribers. I've had to introduce the option whereby you can receive your newsletter by either air or surface mail. If you choose the latter, the subscription rate remains the same as before. For details, see inside.

To everyone, good viewing.

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LETTERS

Christopher Brookhouse, 'Hitchcock Annual', P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA

I am looking for serious articles about any aspect of Hitchcock's work. I am open to almost any approach.

Articles, of any length, should be submitted on hardcopy. Accepted work must be provided on disk for preparing camera-ready copy. At the moment I have one accepted piece.

Any help from your readership will be appreciated.

(Editor's note. This sounds exciting! I've already earmarked the price of my subscription.)

* * *

V. Sarada Holt, Bordentown, New Jersey, USA

Thank you for 'The MacGuffin'! I was pleasantly surprised to see my article in there, and I liked the whole publication. I thought it was fairly well-balanced, actually.

The Academy Awards were last night. I can't stand Award ceremonies. The dancing, singing and bad jokes are not worth staying up for. And they usually only nominate and award things which are relatively mainstream. I haven't seen most of the nominees or winners. I do want to see Dances With Wolves, though. I was pleased that a ten-minute student film won Best Short Film. It gives me hope!

(Editor's note. Speaking of awards, Sarada mentions that she's won a valuable scholarship to attend Drew University. Well done, Sarada! I bet everyone's beaming at your place!)

* * *

Don Gilbert, 255 S. West Ave, Elmhurst, IL 60126, USA, (708) 941-7348

I think your 'MacGuffin' is terrific! Hope you can keep it up by receiving many subscribers.

You may be receiving letters/articles from me when I can catch up with a multitude of tasks. I have almost all of Hitch's movies on VHS tape. What do you think of his 'Australian' film, Under Capricorn (Bergman and Cotten)?

Suggestion: you might publish a list of members' names, addresses, phone numbers, by way of encouraging correspondence among ourselves.

(Editor's reply. Thanks, Don. I think Under Capricorn, despite some perfunctory scripting, is under-rated by many people. But Lesley Brill's recent book on Hitch, reviewed this issue, should help correct that. As for your other point, though it's not regular policy I'd be happy to publish addresses, etc., where people indicate that they're agreeable.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Hand over the cash ...

Hitchcock enthusiasts are familiar with double agent George Blake, whose escape from Wormwood Scrubs prison and flight to Moscow in 1966 were the basis for the screenplay The Short Night. In 1980 Hitchcock was preparing to film the screenplay when he died.

There have been numerous books about the Blake case, and at least one completed feature film (John Huston's The Mackintosh Man, made in 1973). The latest book is called 'The Blake Escape: How We Freed George Blake and Why' by two friends, Patrick Pottle and Michael Randle. In payment, they received £30,000 from their publisher.

Now the British courts have ruled that the money constitutes "a benefit of the offence" and must be forfeited. The decision is in line with a 1977 New York direction which required crooks who write books to give their royalties to the victims of the crime (its most recent ruling coming down hard on Mafia man Henry Hill, whose 'Wiseguy' was filmed by Martin Scorsese as GoodFellas).

Vale David Lean (1908-1991)

David Freeman's screenplay of The Short Night (see above) was published some years ago with a suitable introduction by its author. Perhaps Robert Bolt may be persuaded to do likewise with the screenplay of Nostromo, now that its intended director, the celebrated David Lean, is dead.

Joseph Conrad's pessimistic masterpiece (1904) was the work on which Lean wanted to end his career: it would have been his first film since A Passage to India in 1984. Sets had been built at Nice, most of the $US45 million funding was in place, three directors including Arthur Penn were being paid to keep their diaries open should Lean's health fail during filming. Sadly, Lean became ill in January with the film still in pre-production.

The best Lean Films (Brief Encounter, Great Expectations, Lawrence of Arabia) are themselves minor masterpieces of imagination and dark - but not noir - vision. Critics who see in them only his, and Bolt's, painstaking craftsmanship overlook that simple fact. An important creative partnership has ended.

A critic retires

Afflicted with what she calls "a bum heart", Pauline Kael has retired, age 72, after serving more than two decades as film critic on 'The New Yorker'.

Besides concern over her health, Kael cited the current state of the American film industry as a reason for her getting out now: "I was not eager to see another Oliver Stone movie".

Although there are still many fine film critics writing in America, the situation as far as public influence goes is now likely to see a further shift from the print media to the television reviewers, notably Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert, who reach the most people with their "two thumbs up, two thumbs down" brand of movie endorsement.

Pauline Kael's 1989 book, 'Hooked', is reviewed below. Here are a couple more of her post-1989 pronouncements.

On Robert De Niro in Awakenings: "He does the tics and jiggles well. It's in the quiet moments that he's particularly bad. People get the idea that someone is a great actor and it takes them decades to shake it off."

On this year's Academy Award nominations, and Dances With Wolves in particular: "I don't think I've ever seen a worst bunch of candidates [for Best Picture] ... Dances With Wolves is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head."

There goes that rare commodity, an independent thinker.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Kael, Pauline: 'Hooked' (E.P.Dutton, 1989)

'Hooked' is an anthology of film reviewer Pauline Kael's work, taken from the pages of 'The New Yorker' circa 1985-88. Her book came to me serendipitously, as an overstock bargain in my local bookstore; I recognised Kael's name from Harlan Ellison's 'Harlan Ellison's Watching'. Mr Ellison expresses a lot of respect for the lady in his eclectic, quirky, and endlessly fascinating book, so I thought, why not? Why not indeed? While Siskel and Ebert bicker on like a couple of quarrelsome married folk, Ms Kael expresses some surprising, less often voiced insights into popular culture, as portrayed on the big screen. Ruthlessly, she shoots down such mega-hits as Dirty Dancing (a shallow, masturbatory coming-of-age fantasy for girls), Fatal Attraction (watch out for those mean, crazy, single career gals), and The Colour Purple (an expurgated, no-guts adaptation of the original novel, that succeeds only in completely vilifying the male gender). It is with genuine surprise that I note Ms Kael is 72 years of age, indicting myself of ageism, I'm sure, but her writing is so very topical and fresh that the "image" it inspired for me was more that of a thoughtful baby boomer. I also note, with some sorrow, that Ms Kael has recently retired from regular reviewing in 'The New Yorker', after 23 years of faithful service. It's like making a new friend and then finding out she's leaving town.

Lisa Beglinger

Brill, Lesley: 'The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films' (Princeton University Press, 1988; hardcover)

When Hitchcock told a BBC interviewer,[1] "reality is something none of us can stand", was he being a romantic or a realist?

Hard to say, but I'd suggest both. On the other hand, I can't see Lesley Brill arguing anything but one way. Professor Brill, like Francois Truffaut, believes that Hitchcock was "essentially a romantic".

He points out that many of Hitchcock's characters seek a lost innocence, though he would distinguish between the "romantic" and the "ironic" films:

> In the majority of [Hitchcock's] works, the conventions of happy fairy tales ... lead to conclusions in which central lovers live more or less happily ever after. In the ironic movies, romantic expectations are raised only to be disappointed.

By "ironic", he means simply "cynical" or "not romantic": thus, from the start, questions of realism or truth-to-life are conveniently excluded. (A small flaw in a delightful book, it might seem, but one with consequences.) When Brill does turn to the real world, he usually covers it in an elegant phrase or two.

For instance, it's revealing that he particularly likes The Trouble With Harry (1955), which we're told is the one Hitchcock film to exclude "the stained and vulnerable condition of humanity". We're reminded that the characters in this pastoral comedy live in a near-Edenic state where even the troublesome - and dead - Harry Worp is a "benign" corpse. Just a warp in life's woodwork, so to speak.

Still, Harry's case is also illuminating in other ways. To this reviewer, the film fits snugly into an English pastoral tradition. Its cheery spirit gives it a position, vis-à-vis Hitchcock's other work, not unlike the relation of the country scenes in Dickens's 'Pickwick Papers' to the rest of that tale, filled with law courts, prisons and genuinely ironic misunderstandings.[2] Further, at times in both works hints of renewal and resurrection fill the air. Brill notes of Harry that even sheriff Calvin Wiggs "restores antique automobiles - brings them back, as it were, to life".[3]

Appropriately, the events of the film take place in New England. Brill believes they express the essential dream behind all Hitchcock's work, a dream of people complete and fulfilled, and justice prevailing without the rigidity and inaccuracy of law.[4] He easily explains why Hitchcock needed to make only one such parable of an unfallen world: "Virtue, as diverse thinkers have argued in various ways, has few forms; error has many."

Now, a key film to dwell on "error", as opposed to "virtue", is Vertigo (1958). This of course is a very "ironic" work indeed. No renewal or resurrection here: all signs of its possibility have become just further reminders of "the irremediable human condition". We are back in the (to me, Schopenhauerian) world of suffering and limitation. Thus, on the role of art and its analogues in Vertigo, Brill notes:

> Most two-dimensional art - the "Portrait of Carlotta" and Hitchcock's Vertigo, say - have the same constraints as a conventional silhouette; it can show only one side of things, 180 or 360 degrees.

Brill means that art can show only surfaces - even when, say, the Vertigo camera is suggestively tracking around the mysterious Judy/Madeleine (who is also in a sense both "Carlotta" and Kim Novak). He adds that the function of mirrors in the film is to "remind us of the other side. They warn us of the incompleteness of what we can see directly."

Again this is Schopenhauerian, through and through. As it's an important point, I'll let Dr Oliver Sacks ('Awakenings') put the matter expertly:

> Schopenhauer's thesis is that the world presents itself to us under two aspects - as Will and [Representation] - and that these two aspects are always distinct and always conjoined; that they totally embrace, or inform, one another. To speak in terms of either alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of constructing a meaningful world ...

Happily, as Sacks brilliantly shows, words like "plan" and "design", with their duplex meanings, have the power to unite hidden structure and immediate intent - though some scientists may not own it. Brill, also brilliantly, tells us how Scottie in Vertigo strives to know the truth but is blocked from his "profounder knowledge" by ratiocination: "what he discovers deductively gives him only another surface understanding". Audiences sense the solution, that Scottie should "accept a loving intuition, but both times [when that appears imminent] the chance is snuffed by an immediately subsequent event". Brill's conclusion is sombre: "Nothing seems possible in Vertigo, and only nothing."[5]

It's not without bathos, then, that round about here Brill falls into the same trap as Scottie (and the scientists mentioned by Dr Sacks). I hinted earlier at the book's conceptual flaw. Now, because of Brill's obligation to his theoretical framework (adapted from Northrop Frye), his "profounder knowledge" momentarily deserts him and he attributes Vertigo's tragic outcome to mere Hitchcockian perversity: the director on this occasion was making an "ironic" work, the polar opposite of "romance".

Other Vertigo commentators, like Robin Wood and Tania Modleski, fall back on psychology to explain what the film is ultimately about. It's likely that theirs is a more vital approach than Brill's, but I want to stick my neck out and suggest that all these specific explanations can be subordinated, in a relevant and real sense, to Schopenhauerian metaphysics - and that's especially my feeling after reading Brill's book.

Let me put it like this. It's well and good that a particular interpretation (Wood's)[6] shows how birth trauma lie at the root of Scottie's inability to accept Madeleine - and the "loving intuition" Brill says she holds out - but where does that leave us? Still out in the cold, surely. We must watch from afar as the great universal theme which Dr Sacks calls "tribulation" is raised only to be explained away - precisely the sort of thing Madeleine would protest against.[7] On the other hand, not only does Schopenhauer provide a comprehensive explanation of "tribulation" which is empirically based and ethically considered - and looks to me the product of a sensibility very like Hitchcock's - but it's remarkable, in fact, for bearing directly on Vertigo and Hitchcock's work generally.

Quite obviously, I should illustrate all this with numerous and detailed examples. In fact, I have already gone some way to doing so in earlier issues of 'The MacGuffin', and in parts of this review. Here I can only assert that Brill himself time and again describes Hitchcock's work in Schopenhauerian terms. A last illustration will have to do. When Brill's discussion reaches Marnie (1964), he reverts to the theme of art, this time in its curative and harmonising aspects:

> What Hitchcock's movies represent is not the flux of ordinary life but the essential meaning underlying that flux, which can be comprehended most universally in the intensifications and stylizations of art.

Regular 'MacGuffin' readers may straight away have spotted how this formulation echoes Schopenhauer's distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, Representation and Will - and (if not straight away!) how it proceeds to recommend something very like his cognitive approach to aesthetics, his theory of forms ...

More to the point, the experience of watching Marnie may indeed put us in touch with an intuition that is clearly eluding the film's characters, and to which both Mark Rutland (in the film) and Schopenhauer respond with their respective calls for "compassion".

* * *

But, as I say, Brill is more committed to Northrop Frye than to Schopenhauer. (Let me be clear. I doubt that he has even read the latter. Certainly I know some professional philosophy lecturers who haven't.) Which raises another matter. Brill insists that while the "romances" display the true Hitchcockian spirit, the "ironic" films merely conceal it. Here I feel that his evidence is slight, even wishful, and that once again he has been ill-served by an either/or approach. There was always a dark side to Hitchcock, just as there was to Dickens. For both artists, it took the form of a "fascination of repulsion", an obsession, with evil ...[8]

It's when Brill treats of The Lodger (1926), in what I take to have been the earliest-conceived part of his book (published separately in at least two previous versions), that you can see the wishful element emerge. This time, he advances his singularly unhelpful theory of a "Persephone myth" running through Hitchcock's work, by which he appears to mean little more than that Hitchcock sometimes linked his heroines to flower imagery: hence (it's suggested) the director conceived the character named Daisy in The Lodger, the blossom design on Eve Kendall's wallpaper in North by Northwest, Madeleine's posy in Vertigo. Brill asserts that the "mythic subfoundation of The Lodger ... the Persephone myth ... testifies to the underlying romantic structure of the movie", but it's far from being clear. And, of course, the association of flowers with female characters can be seen elsewhere (for example, Mai Zetterling's apartment in Alf Sjöberg's Hets). I wish he had taken Occam's razor to the whole conception.

My interpretation of The Lodger is indicated in a separate article (see pp. 15-20). It's time to set about correcting any impression I may have given that Brill's book is anything less than substantial, scholarly in the best sense, and fresh. Reading it was a pleasure, especially for someone who shares its author's liking for certain films sometimes dismissed as being "old-fashioned" or "women's pictures"! By the vigour of his insight into Under Capricorn (1949) and I Confess (1953), in particular, Brill has redeemed them from their unjust reputations as "failed Hitchcock". At times, just a well-turned sentence or two helps do the trick. In Under Capricorn, Hattie and Sam "must overcome not only their personal pasts but the societal past that persists in the infant nation of New South Wales". In I Confess, "Ruth Grandfort must discover not that she loves [Father] Michael, but that she loves Pierre and that her place is with her husband." The latter perceptive comment, on the film's ending, more than compensates for a misleading point Brill makes about Father Logan being denied a straightforward movement "since the opening sequences". In fact, as a Catholic friend of mine once pointed out, there's a crucial scene in the church some distance into the film in which the priest faces down Keller, the murderer, while in full stride. It says everything needful about Father Logan's essential probity and the other man's corruption.

Brill mis-names a couple of characters (from Rope and To Catch a Thief), and twice mis-quotes dialogue. By coincidence, the latter occasions are similar. When Keller taunts Father Logan at the end of I Confess, in terms which Brill says evoke Christ, the pathetic man asks: "What has happened to your friends? They mob you, they call at you!" For "mob", Brill substitutes "martyr". And in Marnie, after the free-association game, Marnie does not exclaim (as Robin Wood's Hitchcock book also has it), "Oh, God, somebody help me." She simply asks, movingly, "Oh, can't somebody help me?"

Whatever its flaws, Brill's remains perhaps the most meritorious and unassuming of all the critical studies of Hitchcock so far. Definitely one for readers of 'The MacGuffin' to own and enjoy.

K.M.

Notes

1. Huw Wheldon, in a discussion reported in 'The Listener' that dealt principally with The Trouble With Harry.

2. "Irony" is defined in Chambers Dictionary as "a situation or utterance (as in a tragedy) that has a significance unperceived at the time, or by the person involved"; "a condition in which one seems to be mocked by fate or the facts".

3. The Hitchcock film seems to allude to 'Pickwick' by having an elderly character constantly address a younger one as "Sammy" - shades of Mr Weller and son. It's worth noting that 'Pickwick' was Dickens's first book, the remarkable 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' his last. Both invite thematic comparison with Hitchcock's Harry and Family Plot respectively, using the sort of analysis Brill applies to those films.

4. Compare Schopenhauer's concept of "eternal justice", as opposed to "temporal justice", which I described in an article on Vertigo in 'MacGuffin' 1.

5. Perhaps Brill should have recalled that in Marnie Mark Rutland (Sean Connery) mis-quotes some lines from Emerson, part of a passage which reads, "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man ..." To which he might compare, with Scottie and the Vertigo audience in mind, the famous last page of Schopenhauer's 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. 1, which reads in part: "we freely acknowledge that what remains after the complete abolition of the will is, for all who are still full of the will, assuredly nothing ..."

6. Wood's 1983 article, "Fear of Spying", reprinted in 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986) as "Male Desire, Male Anxiety".

7. Madeleine in the film protests only - or so it seems - against "explaining away" Carlotta's reincarnation in herself. In fact, I think the viewer feels something much more comprehensive is at stake.

8. The phrase "fascination of repulsion" is Dickens's own. I should point out that Brill somewhat eases up on the "Hitchcock was a romantic" line by the end of his Vertigo/Psycho chapter. I can accept the following: "Hitchcock, like most of us, must have fervently hoped that rebirth in love should be the way of things, and dreaded that it might not be."

Erratum

I apologise to readers, and the author of the book, for an error in my review last issue of Professor Prawer's 'Caligari's Children'. By mistake, I said that the book draws no connection between The Cabinet of Dr Caligari and the works of the writer, E.T.A. Hoffmann. In fact, it makes the connection in some detail. I mis-read my 2-month-old notes.

K.M.

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FILM REVIEWS

(Future issues of 'The MacGuffin' will carry brief reviews of non-current films. To set the ball rolling, we look this time at three Asian movies. The first of them is itself an introduction to the wonderful world of the Indian cinema.)

'Cinema Cinema' (1979)

Krishna Shah's 2½-hour compilation of clips from Bombay movies provides an introduction to Indian film history that is undeniably entertaining. The director himself appears at the start to note that India turns out "the most films in the world. Every year 550 films are made for an outlay of 880 million rupees".

Shah calls Bombay "India's Hollywood". (He should know. He has worked in both places.) He adds: "India's Hollywood has all that America's Hollywood has. Film stars, sex, glamour and wealth. You'll find jealousy, gossip and, most importantly, the audience. 70 million viewers every week ..."

The 'gimmick' of Shah's film is to show us a 'typical' Bombay audience reacting to the various clips. And react they do. At times some of the spectators become almost as volatile as an Indian (or Pakistani) sports crowd.

But the films are the thing. We learn all the usual facts. The typical Indian movie can be four or five hours long, and include song, dance and comic segments whose relation to the film's storyline is minimal. There may be many such 'interludes' in a given movie - one film had 60 songs. On the other hand, Indian films are made in diverse genres which are often based on overseas models. Until recently, there was no kissing allowed in Indian films.

Importantly, the audiences are well versed in the ancient myths and stories that underlie many of the movie plots. They also bone up on their favourite stars and directors in the various fan magazines and serious film journals.

One thing I missed in Cinema Cinema was any commentary on Indian filmmaking's 'rules' and codes. Just as with India's music, so with its cinema, there exist recognised 'moods' and shifts of narrative tone. The performers use a quite definite language of expression, gesture, costuming, etc., which means that western viewers may need some help to appreciate the true craft involved.

K.M.

* Here's an update on the statistics in Krishna Shah's film. In 1990, some 948 feature films were produced in India, a figure that doesn't include documentaries and TV films. More than half of the total, about 500 films, were made in Madras. Bombay's share in production appears to have slipped a bit.

** Readers who would like in-depth information about Indian cinema are referred to such publications as Eric Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy's 'Indian Film' (2nd edition, 1980), Paul Willemen and Behroze Gandhy's 'Indian Cinema' (British Film Institute dossier), and Andrew Robinson's recent biography of India's leading director, 'Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye' (Andre Deutsch).

'My Memories of Old Beijing' (1982)

Made about a year before the first 'modern' Chinese film, Yellow Earth, this one (d. Wu Yigong) couldn't be more different. Or could it? Certainly a nostalgia piece, as its title implies, it nevertheless reflects a freedom that Chinese cinema hadn't always known - or reached for.

An old woman, Lin Yingzi, remembers the Beijing of her childhood: the camels in the street, the reputedly mad lady sorrowing for the baby daughter who was taken from her, the thief hiding in the overgrown grounds of a deserted house. But behind these details others are implied, some tragic. References to student demonstrations and bloody government intervention eerily anticipate the recent events of Tiananmen Square.

Altogether, the film manages to be both multi-levelled and warmly evocative, one of the most appealing about childhood since Hollywood's To Kill a Mockingbird and the best of the British Dickens adaptations. Winner of the Grand Prix at the 1983 Manila Film Festival.

K.M.

A Taxing Woman (1987)

A divorcée invests her considerable energies in her job as an Inspector for the Japanese National Tax Agency. A fun film, which I couldn't turn off (watching it on TV). Has some of the entertaining sadism and seamless construction of Rear Window: we watch the tax lady land both small fry and big fish, the latter not without a struggle. Another of the film's likely forebears is Kurosawa's High and Low whose pace and verve (and name of a major character) it shares. It's a further fine study of contemporary Japanese mores by Juzo Itami, son of famous director Mansaku Itami.

K.M.

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Japanese Film: The Basic Books

(Editor's note. Here's an expert description of the major books on Japanese cinema available in English, with an indication of the usefulness, and limitations, of each. A list of the books follows the article.)

The Japanese film industry is immensely indebted to author Donald Richie for the work he has done to popularise and elucidate Japanese cinema abroad. For two decades (from 1959-1979) the literature on Japanese film was dominated by his publications on the industry, its products, and his favourite directors (Ozu and Kurosawa). Longtime resident of Tokyo, aficionado of both traditional and avant garde theatre in Japan, and a Japanese film buff, he is now a familiar personality at international film festivals, presenting retrospective packages of Japanese films and introducing unknown new Japanese directors to eager audiences. Many of us first encountered Japanese cinema through a combination of festival screenings and Richie's books; it was his particular enthusiasms that guided the acquisition and distribution of Japanese films in the English-speaking world up to the 1980s.

Richie's first major publication, 'The Japanese Film: Art and Industry', co-authored with Joseph Anderson, remains the standard work in English on Japanese film history. The book is in two parts. The first part offers a chronological account of the Japanese industry from 1900-1960. For the last three decades (1930-1960), chapters on industrial history in a particular period are interspersed with chapters describing

the films themselves. The second part provides a series of essays on the content, technique, directors, stars and audiences of Japanese film. These essays constitute a general introduction to the classic Japanese cinema for the uninitiated western viewer. As a whole, the book provides a great deal of information on industrial history, based on empirical but undocumented research, in the form of a continuous readable narrative; an introduction to the major Japanese film personalities (up to 1960); and capsule descriptions of a great number of films. The revised version, published in 1982, contains two appendices, in the form of essays by the two authors, and an extensive bibliography. Anderson's appended 'thoughts' cover three topics: the role played by the benshi, the narrator who accompanied silent films; some reasons for the distinctive flavour of movies made at the Shochiku Company's studio in Kamata; and the effects of television on the film industry. Richie's appended essay attempts to update the book by offering a summary account of Japanese film production in the two decades (1960-1980) after the original book was published.

Other Richie books of the 60s and 70s were less concerned with history than with (i) explicating the cultural differences which may produce barriers to the western viewer's appreciation of Japanese film; and (ii) promoting the international status of Kurosawa and Ozu as great film artists. In his attempt to make Japanese cinema more accessible, Richie functioned as a populariser and promoter rather than a scholar, so some of his earlier pronouncements may now make Japanese studies (and cinema studies) experts cringe. He sometimes sounds patronising towards Japanese people and Japanese culture; and his liberal humanist approach to cinema, especially his praise for the realism and universal truths of Ozu and Kurosawa, now carries an anachronistic ring.

During the 70s in the United States and Britain, feminist film criticism emerged as a forceful challenge to traditional approaches to the cinema, and in 1976 the American feminist Joan Mellen published 'The Waves at Genji's Door' which surveys the Japanese cinema from an ideological perspective. It remains the only book on Japanese cinema to critically examine the films' representation of women, and offers a provocative challenge to the almost universal acclaim of Ozu and Kurosawa by drawing attention to the patriarchal ideology in their films. The book, which describes and discusses many films by many different directors at great length, is organised around themes - the representation of Japanese history, the Second World War, the family, women, political protest - and the work of particular directors - Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, Naruse, Imai, Hani, Imamura, Ozu, Ichikawa, Oshima. The author reads Japanese cinema as social comment, assessing films and directors on a radical-progressive-conservative scale, according to where they stand in relation to traditional Japanese society and its values. Her readings of films are very polemical; some critics have found them reductive, for she does not allow for different and varied viewer responses in different and varied historical and social conditions. Like the Japanese New Wave directors, whom she particularly admires, she is very quick to identify and excoriate feudalistic, militaristic and ultranationalistic tendencies in Japanese society and culture.

However, Mellen's work was soon overshadowed by that of Noël Burch, whose 'To the Distant Observer' (1979) constitutes the most ambitious re-writing of Japanese film history and the most impressive theorisation of the Japanese cinema to date. Influenced by post-structuralist French cultural theory, and owing a particular debt to Barthes, the author reads the Japanese cinema as 'other' to the mainstream western cinema, in its preoccupation with surface rather than depth, with decentered rather than centered composition, with presentational rather than representational action. He relates this 'other' filmic tradition to a 'unique' Japanese aesthetic tradition, and a uniquely homogeneous culture. Unlike Anderson and Richie, who tend to read Japanese film history as showing a gradual improvement from primitive beginnings to full artistic maturity in the 50s, and then steady decline following the introduction of television, Burch locates the Golden Age of Japanese cinema in the late 30s and early 40s, the time when Japan was most isolated from the West and its films least contaminated by western codes of filmmaking.

Although he propounds a theory of the essential difference of Japanese cinema as a whole, Burch singles out the familiar masters (Ozu, Mizoguchi, Kurosawa and Oshima) for special attention. But he concentrates on the formal rather than the thematic components of their work, and in the process perversely dismisses some of their acclaimed masterpieces in favour of his own revised list. His book is impressive - and unique among the histories of Japanese film - in two ways: (i) in its rigorous application of a (contemporary western) theoretical framework; and (ii) in its close attention to the formal construction of particular films. At the same time, it shares with neo-formalist criticism generally an obsession with <u>how</u> films are constructed, and a corresponding lack of interest in <u>what</u> the films are about. Furthermore, Burch's radical

aesthetic politics would seem to fit comfortably with an isolationist nationalist politics, and with all the associated arguments about the essential difference and uniqueness of the Japanese (people, language, culture and society).

By the 80s, viewers and scholars in the West began to question the practice of academic orientalism, and to express the desire to hear the voices of native informants. Richie and Mellen quote extensively from interviews with Japanese directors in order to align their readings of films with authorial intentions, but do not give much credence to Japanese film critics. Burch claims that the very notion of theory is alien to Japan (Preface, p.13) and only occasionally draws on indigenous views to support his argument. Audie Bock is the sole western critic who has made extensive use of Japanese critical literature. For her 1978 book, 'Japanese Film Directors', a survey of the lives and work of ten major Japanese directors from three generations, she researched the leading Japanese film journals ('Kinema Jumpo' and 'Eiga Hyoron') and consulted a large number of Japanese books. (Apart from giving a voice to Japanese criticism, Bock's book is a useful reference on another count: it provides a detailed filmography for all the directors she covers.) Her choice of directors is wider than the usual canon, embracing a diversity of filmmakers like Naruse, Kinoshita, Ichikawa and Shinoda, as well as the familiar list of great masters.

The only Japanese film critic who has been translated into English is Sato Tadao. Now almost a national treasure, Sato is the most prolific and most respected of postwar film critics in Japan. His 'Currents in Japanese Cinema', published in 1982 in Gregory Barrett's translated and edited version, is a collection of essays, largely from his 1970 publication, 'Nihon Eiga Shiso-shi', on a great many themes and genres in Japanese film. A film buff with wide tastes and generous sympathies, Sato writes in an impressionistic and journalistic, rather than an academic, style. In this book, he tends to read films as indices to social trends and reflections of Japanese society and culture. Widely read and self educated, Sato promotes himself as a supporter of popular culture, a man of the people, in contrast to élitist academic critics. Unfortunately the academic critics have not been translated into English so readers outside Japan have not had the opportunity to compare his work with theirs.

Keiko McDonald, who teaches Japanese literature and film at the University of Pittsburgh, gives an exegetic reading of 12 Japanese film classics from the 50s and 60s in her 1983 publication, 'Cinema East'. Designed for use with American university students, her discussion focuses on cultural information designed to elucidate the 'foreign' aspects of these films, and make them accessible and enjoyable. She offers a detailed exposition of the films' narratives, themes, symbolism, social significance, sources (many of her chosen films are literary adaptations) and ultimate meanings. She positions herself as a native informant with the key to the correct interpretation of each film.

Sato's enthusiasm for the New Left and the films of Oshima is shared by David Desser, an American academic who recently published a book on the Japanese New Wave cinema of the 60s, with evocative chapter headings borrowed from film titles. Desser is concerned to bring historical specificity to his account of the New Wave, locating it in its social context and explicating the political allusions and significances of the films. He criticises Burch for his over-emphasis on film form, and propounds the need to analyse the radical content as well as the radical form of New Wave films.

However, the last word emanates from the formalist camp. David Bordwell is probably the most systematic and most prolific scholar today on the history of film form. Some time ago he published journal articles on the formal idiosyncracies of the films of Mizoguchi and Ozu; now he has produced the definitive study of Ozu's work. Alongside the analytical rigour of his arguments and his exhaustive attention to formal detail, Richie's and Sato's studies of Ozu pale into a waffle of biographical anecdotes and woolly responses. Bordwell's work is formidably precise and systematic. As a neo-formalist, he shares with Burch a preoccupation with close formal analysis, but disagrees with Burch's culturalist thesis. Bordwell links Ozu's work to the racy international popular culture of Taisho-period Japan (1912-1925) rather than to a high cultural and purely Japanese aesthetic tradition; and finds him a unique artist rather than a representative Japanese figure. He stresses Ozu's formal playfulness, and dismisses his thematic material (nostalgia for the past, the impermanence of things) as rehashed clichés rather than meaningful philosophical or spiritual statements.

Doubtless the debates on Ozu will continue, as his work seems to provide an endless source of fascination for film scholars. For my part, I hope that the existence of an Ozu industry, and the preoccupation with the 'great masters', the artist-directors, will not preclude research and publications on other popular Japanese films and on other aspects of the prolific Japanese film industry, which remain under-researched.

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Authors and Titles

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The allusiveness of Psycho; classic Hollywood composers; book reviews (e.g. 'Acting in the Cinema'). Plus all the usual features, including 'News' and 'Radek Reviews'.

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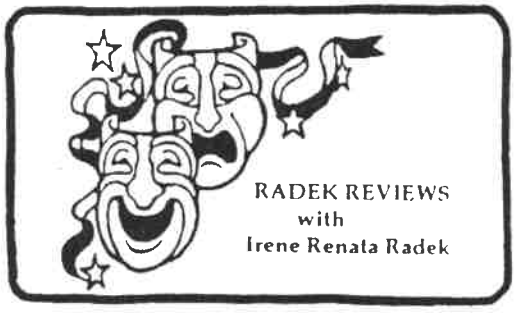

1. "SILENCE IS GOLDEN" Jonathan Demme's The Silence of the Lambs evokes the silence of the audience - a hypnotic, horrified silence overwhelmed by the atrocities of mankind. Based on Thomas Harris's novel, Silence is darkly deranged, weirdly wonderful, with a performance by Anthony Hopkins that will surely go down in movie history.

Chief Crawford of the Behavioural Science Unit at Quantico, Virginia's FBI Academy, assigns trainee Clarice Starling to solicit the help of imprisoned psychiatrist/murderer, Dr Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter, in finding clues to the identity of serial killer Buffalo Bill. Bill's predilection for skinning his young overweight female victims is akin to Hannibal's cannibalistic tendencies.

In a memorably mesmerising performance, Anthony Hopkins (The Bounty) creates the epitome of evil - a demented devil with a deceptively urbane side. If Hannibal didn't regularly spout monstrous obscenities, he'd seem perfectly in place at high tea with the Queen Mother.

An undeniable argument for the death penalty, Hannibal dines on his victims, necessitating a horrendously barbaric mouthpiece and restraints whenever humans are within his gluttonous reach.

The obvious (but wrong) choice for Hannibal was Jack Nicholson, but Nicholson could easily have made Hannibal into a joke ... "Heeeeere's Hannibal ...!"

Jodie Foster (Oscar winner for The Accused) creates Clarice with equal doses of vulnerability and tough confidence, alternating easily and honestly between the two extremes. Foster's only problem is her tendency to mumble (a fairly common malady for actors lacking a theatrical background); occasionally Clarice's dialogue is all but lost.

FBI boss Jack Crawford is played with warm intelligence by the oft-menacing Scott Glenn (the guy who drank the worm in Urban Cowboy). Cinema's FBI-guys are usually portrayed as bumbling cartoon cutouts so it's refreshing to see Glenn creating a 3-dimensional human of considerable charm.

Ted Levine (Betrayed) portrays ghoulish transvestite serial-killer Buffalo Bill. Levine looks innocuously like the guy next door when he wants to but his transformation into bloodcurdling Bill absolutely makes your skin crawl. And inspires you to take a closer look at your till-now benign neighbour ...

The Silence plot twists and turns like a terrifying carnival ride - the seemingly obvious becomes the totally unpredictable. It's anything but the now-commonplace and tediously over-used just-when-you-think-it's-over-someone-gets-grabbed ending.

The relationship between Clarice and Hannibal fascinates. You can almost feel Hannibal penetrating her mind, teasing her thoughts and memories with his piercing vision.

On the downside, the Silence sound mixers will definitely not bring Oscar home for this one. In various vital scenes, ominous rumbling and melodramatic humming obliterate whatever dialogue Foster's mumbling hasn't already obscured. (Try to see Silence with someone who's read the book.)

If you can remember that the corpses, cannibalism and ikky bugs are only special effects, The Silence of the Lambs is well worth seeing for its entrancing characters created by a very talented cast and for the

fascinating way director Jonathan Demme (Married to the Mob) keeps his audience steadily off-balance and collectively spellbound.

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2. "DR JEKYLL AND MR CLEAN" Joseph Ruben's Sleeping With the Enemy will keep you up at night. Though some of its scenarios are a little too convenient, this is a surprisingly tight and talent-filled romance/thriller full of scary suspense and disquieting romance. Based on Nancy Friday's bestseller, Enemy is a praiseworthy showcase for new talent - and a great argument for staying single.

Sweet, submissive Laura Burney (Julia Roberts) is married to obsessively fastidious Martin (Patrick Bergin). After 4 years of torturous mental and physical abuse, Laura plans her own 'death' and daring escape to the Midwest where she will start a new life. That is, if she can break the chains of her past ...

I'd never been overly impressed with Julia Roberts's acting ability but, as Laura/Sara, Roberts shows true ability in creating a character with whom we can sympathise and for whom we can cheer. Her metamorphosis from fearful battered wife to brave new independent is believably gradual and poignant, achieved in gentle, tentative steps.

However, director Joseph Ruben's decision to have Roberts virtually reenact the famous Pretty Woman costume change montage is imaginative cop-out. In last year's megahit, Roberts tries on high fashion to the tune of "Pretty Woman" as beau-to-be Richard Gere looks on; in Enemy she tries on theatrical costumes to "Brown-Eyed Girl" as beau-to-be Kevin Anderson looks on. It's a light-hearted and very welcome 'intermission' within an otherwise emotionally charged film, but the concept is getting a mite overworked.

Irish actor Patrick Bergin (Mountains of the Moon) is Laura's totally sinister psycho-hubby, Martin. Bergin's so adept at portraying evil (especially with those chilling ice-blue stares!) that Martin seems almost subhuman. And, since it's hard to believe that any human would share Martin's complete lack of redeeming qualities, it's difficult to understand why Laura ever married him ... Could such overwhelming evil remain completely hidden for the entire duration of their courtship? And what about his obsession with cleanliness and order? The guy is Dr Jekyll and Mr Clean! Is love THAT blind?

Conversely, Enemy's good guy is the good-natured, small-town drama prof Ben, portrayed with charming ease by fresh film newcomer Kevin Anderson (small part in In Country). Anderson creates an instantly likable character who is gentle, funny and yes, even sensitive without being a doormat. And, since Anderson is not the typical romantic lead, he comes across as markedly more real and more identifiable.

It's refreshing that Ruben possessed the courage to hire virtual unknowns, Anderson and Bergin. When novices are this talented, they can greatly benefit a film as it's easier to believe in the reality of characters portrayed by unknowns whose real-life preferences and peccadillos aren't featured in the daily news.

Just as Enemy's good and bad guy are unqualified opposites, so are the locations. When Laura is a prisoner in her Cape Cod home, the screen is saturated with cold blues and icy whites. The Burney house, all sharp angles and clean glass, stands completely alone on a barren beach with a turbulent inky ocean beyond. The atmosphere is cold and lonely - just like Laura herself.

But when Laura leaves for Iowa, the colours, like her life, suddenly become warmer and happier: the sky is gold and turquoise, the trees and grass a soft summer green. Laura's cosy cottage is surrounded by similarly welcoming homes - one of which even contains her handsome prince. No subtle symbolism or cinematography here - but the drastic use of colour works well to set Enemy's extreme moods.

Now the bone of contention: since Martin is so obsessed with Laura's every move, how did she manage to squirrel away enough money to buy a bus ticket, clothing, food - and pay rent and deposit on her new home (even if it is a surreal $700/month!)?

Besides, if I relocated to an unknown town, my neighbours would undoubtedly be a reclusive old spinster with 120 cats (all of which would mistake my lawn for their litter box) and a pack of Hell's Angels who'd rev their Harleys and play AC/DC at full volume 24 hours/day.

Anyhow, what's wrong with this picture? Laura's smart enough to plan a rather complicated escape, yet silly enough to think that a gold ring will flush down the toilet ... oh-kay.

Nevertheless, Sleeping With the Enemy is an alternately sweet and suspenseful study of opposites: good and evil, warm and cold, built upon solidly honest performances. And, of course, a most unforgettable moral (especially for spouse-seekers): Cleanliness is really next to craziness.

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['Radek Reviews' welcomes correspondence. Write to either 'The MacGuffin' (address on back page) or direct to Irene Renata Radek, 3 Louisa Drive, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1E 4T4.]

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Hitchcock's 'The Lodger': A Theory

[Synopsis of the film. To the shabby but respectable home of Mr and Mrs Bunting in London's West End comes a gentlemanly lodger, seeking quiet. The city has lately been disturbed by a succession of atrocious 'Avenger' murders. All the victims have been blonde girls, and all the murders have occurred in a comparatively small area. Indeed, as further murders are committed, it begins to look as if The Avenger is moving towards the Buntings' very street. Meanwhile, The Lodger has become friendly with the Buntings' daughter, the fair-haired Daisy, notwithstanding that she has a boyfriend already, a policeman named Joe. Joe starts to feel jealous. The day comes when he arrests The Lodger on suspicion of being The Avenger, then hears that the murderer has been caught elsewhere. Daisy marries The Lodger.]

According to biographer Donald Spoto, Hitchcock was prevented from ending The Lodger (1926) "on the ambiguous note he had hoped". It seems the studio bosses wouldn't countenance their star, matinee idol Ivor Novello, playing a villain. So not only does the film's conclusion differ significantly from the novel's, a scene has been added in which the real murderer is reported (though not actually shown) caught "red-handed" in another part of the city.[1]

In other words, the film is supposed to establish that The Lodger and The Avenger are two different people. Certainly, most audiences and critics feel it does just that. They accept, like Spoto, that the ending as it stands is unambiguous.

Well, this article will take a contrary view. For a start, I ask the reader to consider the effect of the added scene. There's a movie axiom which says that whatever is shown on screen is real, and whatever is not shown is 'unreal'. The thinking behind it isn't rational, exactly, but it makes emotive sense. By not showing the alleged real murderer, and relying on a mere verbal report, Hitchcock (I suggest) allows some of the doubt that has attended The Lodger to remain.[2]

Now, it's true that the studio bosses were pleased with the film's so-called 'happy' ending, in which The Lodger turns out to be rich and marries Daisy. And the fact that through a window a neon sign still flashes its message, "Tonight Golden Curls" - a message which has previously foreshadowed the murders of blondes by The Avenger - perhaps only seems to add new ambiguity. (William Rothman feels that it constitutes an ironic reference to the characters' wedding night and "the mystery of the sexual act".) On the other hand, audiences of the time would certainly have noticed the similarity of The Avenger's crimes to those of the infamous Jack the Ripper, and might have been expected to recall the widespread theory that the Ripper was a 'toff', a member of the upper classes ...

Before proceeding, I should say something about the film's commentators. Their attitude is very cautious. First, none of them (to my knowledge) allows the possibility that Hitchcock hoodwinked his producers and that The Lodger, the Novello character, is indeed the wanted murderer, as he is in Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel.

Second, no Hitchcock critic (again, to my knowledge) has noted and explored the suggestive analogues with Shadow of a Doubt (1943),[3] which is in many respects Hitchcock's American version of The Lodger - but a version made for a benign, non-interfering producer, Jack Skirball.[4] Watching Shadow, the audience becomes aware that the principal character (Joseph Cotten) is the so-called Merry Widow Murderer. The film's police, though, hear that another suspect has died while running away from arrest, and conclude that he is the guilty party. Ergo, Joseph Cotten must be innocent!

A third point. Hitchcock aficionados know, but sometimes forget, how devious the director could be, not just in dealing with troublesome producers (like The Lodger's C.M.Woolf and Michael Balcon) but in making points in his films by sleight of hand, as it were. On occasion, he'd use a form of near-subliminal suggestion. Spoto records of The Lodger that Hitchcock spent a lot of time on a particular shot that involved showing Novello with a flower pot behind him, the inference (as I read Spoto) being that the effeminate character is a 'pansy'. So much for not compromising the image of the star - Novello in real life was homosexual. More crucially, I think the "Tonight Golden Curls" sign at the end of the film works similarly, raising or confirming doubt about The Lodger's innocence.

Notice I stress the ending's ambiguity. I am not saying that The Lodger is or is not 'The Avenger', only that we can't be sure. That is already more than most audiences and critics have allowed.

* * *

To see better what Hitchcock was doing in The Lodger, it helps to know something about the Jack the Ripper murders. We've noted the likely frisson induced in the film's first audiences when they learnt of The Lodger's being an aristocrat, not so say rich. Here, then, are some further matters in the Ripper case.

There were at least five murders, all of them occurring in 1888 in London's East End. All the victims were prostitutes. When found, each woman had been mutilated and had had her throat cut. The murders took place at night; all but one occurred in the street (or rather, in the typical dingy alley or yard of the Whitechapel district). The murderer's clean escape after each killing suggests he was familiar with the area's cobwebby street-pattern.

Although the case has never been solved, many theories about the killer's identity have been proposed. And the police did make arrests. One person arrested and then released was a shoemaker named Pizer, apparently the "low-class Polish Jew" whom the head of the C.I.D. (Sir Robert Anderson) claimed in his memoirs was the Ripper. Perhaps more information about this particular suspect is due to come to light soon when Scotland Yard's files on the Ripper are made public.[5]

Meanwhile, one engaging theory has long been around. It goes back to, of all people, Rasputin, who is said to have written that the Ripper was a Russian doctor named Pedachenko. Apparently, this man of known homicidal tendencies was sent from Russia to England by the Tsarist authorities in an attempt to embarrass the British police. (Shades of Conrad's 'The Secret Agent'!) According to the same source, Pedachenko was aided in his murders by a friend named Levitski. Further, an issue of the 'Ochrana Gazette', the journal of the Russia secret police, later mentioned Pedachenko's death after his return to Russia, and stated that he had admitted murdering five East End women.

If five is the correct number of the Ripper's victims, then three other women killed in similar circumstances between 1899 and 1891 were prey to a Ripper imitator. Colin Wilson ('Encyclopaedia of Murder') says, "it is well known that the most appalling murder cases seem to provoke imitators".

As for the notion that the Ripper was a medical person, it fits the reported facts: namely, that the killer carried a shiny black bag (or similar) and that he carved up his victims with considerable skill. But that still leaves several suspects. The painter Walter Sickert once took a room in the East End and was told by his landlady how she suspected her previous tenant: the tenant had been an aristocratic young medical student who was subject to brainstorms and seemed to be in hiding from his family. A recent British TV version of the Ripper story, starring Michael Caine, plumped for another name, that of Queen Victoria's chief physician, Sir William Gull. The programme implied that Gull was a true 'Jekyll and Hyde' figure, and reminded its audience how in 1888 R.L.Stevenson's popular story of that title, and a play based on it, had just come out.

Many incidents added to the sensation of the murders. A citizens' vigilante committee was formed; persons suspected of being the murderer were hounded in the streets (especially if they carried a black bag); letters purporting to be from the Ripper ("I am down on whores") were sent to a London news agency. A prominent citizen of the East End, George Lusk, received a letter "From Hell" accompanied by a piece of a murdered woman's kidney. This gruesome detail is mentioned in Hitchcock's Frenzy (1972) where, though, the speaker gets it wrong and says that the kidney was sent to Scotland Yard.

* * *

Practically all the above details play some part or other in Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel and in Hitchcock's film. For now, what may throw most light on Hitchcock's intentions is how he used the details in conjunction with invented touches of his own (or of the novel). Take the possibility that the Ripper had an accomplice. The film, but not the novel, contains a crucial scene which hinges on just such a notion. I mean the flashback to Novello's sister's coming-out ball. On this fatal occasion, we see Novello dancing with his sister at the exact moment an unseen person's hand, across the crowded floor, throws a switch. The lights go out, only to return almost immediately - but now the girl is dead and a card from 'The Avenger' is found near her body.

Clearly, the killer is not the person who doused the lights.[6] I'll deal in a moment with who that person may be, or may represent. The main idea is this: the logical suspect for the killing is the Novello character himself, the person who in two senses was closest to his sister when she died ...

Hitchcock always said he liked stories with plenty of psychology. Well, half way through Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel there's a letter to the press which purports to come from a member of the public calling himself 'Gaboriau' (after the French inventor of the roman policier). The letter is headed "The Avenger: A Theory", and for my money provides the likely inspiration for the film's flashback scene. The writer argues as follows. The Avenger, far from being "the usual type of criminal lunatic" whom the police are looking for, is more probably someone who "comprises in his own person the peculiarities of Jekyll and Hyde". Probably he "is a quiet, pleasant-looking gentleman who lives somewhere in the West End of London", but someone with "a tragedy in his past life" - "a dipsomaniac wife", say - who now lives "maybe with his widowed mother and perhaps a maiden sister". To these latter he is doubtless respectively "an excellent son" and "a kind brother".

Catching from the above its faint whiff of incest (about the same, let's say, as prompted Orwell to comment on the "incestuous" families in Dickens), Hitchcock responded with a full-blown psychology. But then, Freud

was in the air: 1926 was the year both of the German film, Secrets of a Soul (d. G.W.Pabst), about a knife phobia, and the London stage melodrama, 'The Lash', in which a forgotten childhood trauma provides the solution to a present-day mystery.[7] That is, I think we may see in The Lodger not just a brother's jealousy of his beloved sister, whom he murders, but the psycho-pathology of a son driven to madness by his guilty promise to his mother on her deathbed to hunt down 'The Avenger' - himself!. All this, more than thirty years before Psycho!

Moreover, there seems plenty of evidence in the film for what I've just suggested. For one thing, the first murder occurs inside the Novello character's own home - not on the streets, scene of the subsequent killings. And it's interesting that the killer already calls himself 'The Avenger', something which suggests an irrational frame of mind. Following the scene at the mother's deathbed ("My mother never recovered from the shock ..."), the film cuts pointedly to a schematic shot of The Lodger in the present, addressing Daisy. His face is divided by shadow, one side illumined and the other in darkness. For a similar effect, in similar circumstances, you can't help thinking of the parlour scene in Psycho between Marion and Norman ...

Novello portrays The Lodger as neurasthenic - jumpy, verging on possible religious mania - if also seemingly gentle and inoffensive. It's not unlikely that either Mrs Belloc Lowndes or the filmmakers conceived the character with Ernest Renan in mind. Renan, the author of the popular 'Life of Jesus', was featured in a psychological study by Albert Mordell, first published in 1919.[8] In a chapter called "The Oedipus Complex and the Brother and Sister Complex", Mordell suggests that Renan's extreme attachment to his sister explains "the gentleness, the moral tone, the kindliness we find in his writings", and adds that Renan's "love for his sister was a great factor in his making his Jesus somewhat effeminate". We're further told that Renan "emphasized Jesus' love of flowers, his indifference to the external world, his obsession with ... a mission in life."

Now, commentators on The Lodger have long pointed out a certain Christ-symbolism in the film, but what I'm suggesting is that such symbolism emanates within The Lodger's psyche. His sister represents for him an ideal of innocence and purity, which is surely why, in shots of them together, her hair is radiantly backlit in a way that goes beyond any simple plot-emphasis on its blondeness.[9] (It anticipates, in fact, the way Marion in Psycho looks just before her murder.) Accordingly, we may surmise that his dancing with her at her coming-out ball places him in an intolerable bind, though one which he has foreseen. Not wanting to lose her to another, he arranges with an accomplice to kill her. She will be a sacrificial victim.

The question must be asked, who is the accomplice? In Psycho it is 'Mother', but at a naturalistic level that presumably doesn't help us here. At that level, for anything we find out, we might as well call the accomplice Levitski, after Pedachenko's offsider in the Rasputin manuscript. On the other hand, at a figurative level, I think it easy to agree with William Rothman that the accomplice, or doppelgänger figure, represents the film's audience. The hand that throws the light-switch at the coming-out ball is our hand, for as Freud said of the Oedipus complex, we are dealing with a universal phenomenon. Psychologically speaking, each of us would be prepared to contemplate any sacrifice to regain what the Oedipus struggle takes away from us, something blissful associated with the mother ...[10]

In Hitchcock, sisters and mothers are linked. Emma Newton in Shadow of a Doubt is both actual sister and emotional mother to Uncle Charlie, the Joseph Cotten character. (Her very name, Emma, implies both roles, for the letter 'em' in Hitchcock invariably stands for the virginal, Madonna-like image of woman that he, a Catholic, revered.)[11] In The Lodger, the Novello character's aged mother is already dying when he sacrifices his sister; doubtless he had hoped, in some mad way, to thereby save his mother as well as keep his sister for himself. But of course he loses both women. Now begins a further irony. As 'The Avenger', he must have seen his sister as a (potential) betrayer, perhaps someone who like the original woman in Eden could be held responsible for mankind's fall, its loss of bliss ... After killing his sister, his failure to restore that vanished state condemns him to repeat the crime, over and over. His only compensation is that he thus manages to further his Christ-like "indifference to the external world" and need for "a mission in life" - even as the mission leads him, like Oedipus, back to himself. (The murders gradually approach the Buntings' street.) Meanwhile, to the workaday world, he appears as gentle a person as his sister, or his mother, ever was ...

* * *

The film's Christ-symbolism is usually seen as reaching its height when a mob, a vigilante group, seizes Novello and attempts to 'crucify' him after his police handcuffs catch in some railings. (The police had arrested him on suspicion, as in the Ripper case they arrested suspects like the man Pizer.) By the time the police reach him again, he is barely conscious. A shot of his battered body, a concerned Daisy standing over him, seems to some commentators to invoke religious representations of the Virgin attending the dead Christ: a pietà image.[12] Paradoxically, if there's any redemptive note implied, it's a two-way matter. Thus if the mob are redeemed at all by this would-be Christ, their blood-lust, like The Avenger's, sated for the moment, the Novello character may to some extent be redeemed by the great suffering inflicted on him by the mob. Further, not forgetting that he could be guilty of murder, there still appears to be an arbitrariness to his suffering. In fact, the shot I've just described anticipates parts of Hitchcock's The Birds in which a vengeful force-of-nature descends from a clear sky, seemingly with little provocation by the individual victim. So, more ambiguity.

My principal argument, remember, has been that The Lodger may or may not be The Avenger. When the stolid policeman named Joe (in the novel, Joe Chandler, which tells us something) gasps, "My God, he is innocent", the commentators line up to tell us that at this point Hitchcock bowed to his producers and reversed the novel's ending where The Lodger is indeed the murderer, though he goes free. They make no mention of how The Avenger appears to have an accomplice. (Obviously, I am speaking here of the film's naturalistic level.) For all we know, those two may have alternated murders (a variant on the swapped murders in Strangers on a Train). Or the man caught "red-handed" may have been a mere imitator of The Avenger.[13]

Finally, The Lodger marries Daisy, but the audience is entitled to ask (as the question is posed in Spellbound), will he make love to her or will he kill her? It's the last of the many mysteries in the film, though not the ultimate one. That ultimate mystery goes to the very heart of things - to quote the novel, "the infinite misery, the sadness and strangeness, of human life" - and would take (I suggest) a philosopher like Schopenhauer to formulate it. Verbally, that is. As for Hitchcock, he'd now planted the seeds of such master works as Vertigo, Psycho, The Birds ...

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Notes

1. Spoto quotes Hitchcock: "We had to change the script to show that without a doubt [the Novello character] was innocent. So I just never even showed the real murderer." Just?

2. Naturally, in The Wrong Man (1957) the innocent Henry Fonda does finally confront his guilty 'double'.

3. William Rothman certainly notes some of the analogues (e.g. the similar ambience of The Lodger's coming-out ball and Shadow of a Doubt's motif of dancing couples) but he concludes merely: "Shadow of a Doubt goes further than The Lodger when it reveals that Uncle Charles is a killer like the Avenger, not innocent of killing like the lodger". Needless to say, I can't accept this formulation of the difference between the two films.

4. It's worth noting that Shadow of a Doubt borrows several details from Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel: e.g. the main protagonist's carelessness with money; comic scenes involving two characters discussing detective stories. The woman's reaction is especially dwelt on at such times.

5. According to one source, "Scotland Yard's files on the case will be made public in 1992 but they are expected to cast little new light on" The Ripper. Actually, the makers of the recent TV mini-series (see text) appear to have jumped the gun, claiming to have based their conclusions on what they found in these files.

6. It's instructive to note how the commentators avoid admitting this. See especially Maurice Yacowar's 'Hitchcock's British Films' where he praises the film's "subtle distortions of time", and refers in a

disembodied way to "the hand [lowering] the switch" - but never (plausibly) identifies whose hand it could be.

7. See M.W. Disher, 'Melodrama: Plots That Thrilled' (n.d.).

8. A. Mordell, 'The Erotic Motive in Literature'.

9. I'm reminded at this point of how Hitchcock once said that his mother used to refer to him, when he was a boy, as her "little lamb without a spot".

10. It isn't always necessary to invoke Oedipus in such circumstances, of course. Equally pertinent to Rothman's view of Hitchcock's audience is Thomas De Quincey's description of certain Roman spectacles: "Now, if merely to be present at a murder fastens on a man the character of an accomplice, - if barely to be a spectator involves us in one common guilt with the perpetrator; it follows of necessity, that ... the hand which inflicts the fatal blow is not more deeply imbrued in blood than his who sits and looks on ..."

11. On occasion, 'em' could also stand for Magdalen, the fallen woman who is redeemed. But usually, in Hitchcock, the reference is made jokingly (as in Torn Curtain: "Them religious books is in a 'ell of a shambles, Magda").

12. In the 1950s Hitchcock denied the scene is intended to suggest Christ being taken down from the cross. But a decade later, on being quizzed by Truffaut about the same possibility, Hitchcock went along with it: "Naturally, that thought did occur to me". He clearly had the piêta in mind when filming one of the Cuban scenes in Topaz (1969), and reprised it in the film's end-title montage of human suffering.

13. An idea that Hitchcock possibly took from The Cabinet of Dr Caligari which, in turn, seems to have had Jack the Ripper as one of its inspirators.

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ODD SPOT: ONE IDEA LEADS TO ANOTHER

Alfred Hitchcock liked to nudge his audiences by giving his films unexpected details - these sometimes taken from newspapers of the day. For instance, Blackmail (1929) climaxes in the Egyptian Room of the British Museum, thus invoking then-current stories of pharaohs' curses, and the like. Sure enough, the scene includes a man's death: that of theblackmailer, Tracy, who is far from being the film's guiltiest character, though. Audiences are left with a "bad taste" which was to become almost a Hitchcock trademark.

It's also typical of Hitchcock that the germ of the scene probably originated years earlier in his reading of Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel of The Lodger. The novel climaxes at the top of a great staircase inside Madame Tussaud's waxworks in London. The "curious, still, waxen figures" suggest to the startled Lodger "death in life" - much as the Egyptian statues and mummies startle the characters in Blackmail. Certainly it was an idea which haunted Hitchcock, for he afterwards filmed variants of it in the climaxes of Saboteur (1942) and North by Northwest (1959).

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We thank The Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales, for continuing support.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 4 August, 1991 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £2.50

EDITORIAL

'The MacGuffin' is supposed to be two things: a forum for serious study of Hitchcock and his films and a place for ordinary intelligent filmgoers to read and write about films in general. My thought has all along been that these two things are compatible and may overlap.

That's why, if you see yourself as an "ordinary" filmgoer, I'd really like to be hearing from you - either about the Hitchcock film you watched on TV last night or about any film, or film-related topic, that you've thought about lately. We need more "ordinary" content.

Letters will be especially welcome. Which reminds me that Don Gilbert won the letter prize that was offered last time. Hope you've found time to read it, Don.

* * *

About this issue. Ron Conway has written a most interesting letter describing Warner Brothers' Movie World in Queensland, which he visited soon after it opened. And Irene Radek's column reviews the Madonna film Truth or Dare. Among Irene's several scathing, intelligent criticisms of Madonna, she raises the possible effect on impressionable kids of seeing and hearing their idol's 'anything goes' behaviour. Quite so. Yet I couldn't help thinking, as I read Irene's review, that Madonna sounds exactly like the performer that our 'postmodernist' age - in which all forms of sincerity are questioned - either deserves or requires. That's to say, a lot depends on your point of view. Coincidentally, I've been reading Jeffrey Masson's controversial 1984 book, 'The Assault on Truth', which alleges that Freud himself couldn't face a certain possibly widespread phenomenon of childhood. Read what Irene writes about Madonna's relation to her father and you'll understand. My point is that perhaps Madonna may be a liberating figure, after all. Her very name ... What do readers think?

Speaking of postmodernism, it's something that's also discussed in James Naremore's book, 'Acting in the Cinema', which includes an admiring chapter on Martin Scorsese's The King of Comedy starring Robert De Niro and Jerry Lewis. Personally, I think Scorsese's film is one of the key movies of the '80s. See the review of Naremore's book in this issue. There's also a review by Freda Freiberg - following up her article last time on Japanese cinema - of the new book on Kurosawa by Stephen Prince. Freda criticises Prince for omitting to consider Kurosawa's work in its 'industrial' context ...

And there's a long article on Hitchcock's Psycho. It isn't about the experience of watching that film in the cinema so much as about what Hitchcock, in his detachment, may have felt was at issue under the film's surface.

* * *

For reasons of space, some items - including the 'special films' segment - have been held over until next time. Also next time, I'll try to publish a contents index for issues 1-4.

Welcome to our several new readers, mainly from Australia for a change.

To everyone, good viewing.

Rhon

LETTERS

Ronald Conway, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia

I'd thought from the publicity about Warner Brothers' Movie World at Oxenford, Queensland, that it must be broadly identical with Disneyland or Luna Park. Actually, the location includes a fully functioning movie studio with state-of-the-art resources for picture-making. Episodes from the recent revival of Mission Impossible were made there, as was most of the Bryan Brown film, Blood Oath. Sets used in that production still remain; the nearby wooded hillside doubled for its Indonesian jungle shots. Part of a planned feature on The Phantom is to be filmed at Movie World on a budget expected to approach that of Batman.

The lot at Oxenford embraces not only a full street-and-a-half, plus two plazas of shops, restaurants and warehouses, but has five fully operational sound stages. Stage No.5 is the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, and is equipped with a huge 'tank' for sea scenes, complete with wind-machines and dump-trucks. It also has a small compound with well-cared-for animals. So in most ways Movie World is a smaller but more up-date version of the Universal-International lot in Hollywood, and performs a similar function for both serious movie-making and putting on shows for tourists.

At $29 Australian per adult visitor, Movie World now generates most of its own maintenance revenue. If that admission price sounds exorbitant, you should know that it covers admission to at least six separate short shows; you can spend the better part of a day there without once becoming bored. Shops 'flogging' movie items, especially Looney Tunes material, are perhaps rather too much in evidence, but you're not forced to buy their wares. Three fascinating indoor technical set-ups deal with applied 'effects', such as post-shooting of sound-effect synchronisation, the creation of on-screen illusions such as Superman's flights through the air, and part of the actual full-scale and model constructions used in the recent World War II film, Memphis Belle. Excerpts from most of Warner's 3-D films of the '50s can be seen down the street, with viewing glasses and a filmed introduction by Ernest Borgnine. There are displays of stunts by experts and an amusing 'cave of horrors' with full-sized 'Gremlins'.

The proximity of Movie World to the Gold Coast, the Pacific Ocean and the backdrop of the Lamington National Park gives it access to almost every kind of outdoor location. As production costs continue to rise in the U.S., I'll be surprised if in the coming decade this Queensland locale doesn't become a major centre of film production. Movie World is certainly worth one visit - maybe two if you are still young at heart. By car, it's only 45 minutes from central Brisbane.

* * *

Christopher Brookhouse, 'Hitchcock Annual', P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA

I liked your thoughts on The Lodger ('MacGuffin' 3) very much ...

(Editor's note. It's letters like these that keep us going! Don't forget that Christopher is seeking serious articles on Hitchcock, of any length, which should be submitted to him "on hardcopy".)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Hollywood taking over the world

European cinema is in crisis and attendances in Western Europe have been falling off steadily. The trend has been apparent for some time - American director John Landis lamented it publicly last year at the Edinburgh Festival - but now noted film commentator Gilbert Adair has given details in an article for England's 'Guardian' newspaper.

It seems that Western European audiences, with the exception of the French, are preferring the American product to the homegrown one, and are turning away from any indigenous work in their droves. Adair doesn't exactly say so, but it's likely that the European film and TV producers themselves are partly to blame. With the approach of 1992, they are concentrating on turning out what William Fisher in 'Sight and Sound' (Autumn '90) has called "Europudding" - consortium-funded product whose main ingredient is an anodyne (preferably historical) subject, seen as being easier to peddle (if not consume) across EEC boundaries.

In Eastern Europe, according to Adair, the situation is even worse, "given not merely the sudden, quota-free pervasiveness of Hollywood movies but also the no less sudden withdrawal ... of the state subsidies on which film-makers used to depend."

Moreover, "it now tends to be perceived of Europe that no country can be expected to boast more than one major director at a time: Almodovar in Spain, Kaurismaki in Finland, Kieslowski in Poland, Angelopoulos in Greece, Oliveira in Portugal, von Trier in Denmark, Greenaway in Britain."

* * *

Canada, too, has film industry problems. In a recent letter, our columnist Irene Radek attributes some of them, at least, to "the nationalistic obsession (both governmental and that of the so-called 'artistic' community) with inserting ludicrously large amounts of Canadian content into every artistic endeavour", thereby killing "any spontaneous intelligent creativity".

* * *

At least Australia appears to be holding out against total American domination. Melbourne film critic Keith Connolly writes: "Australia is certainly doing a lot more than most European countries to provide a working environment for its film-makers, and this is evident by the number of very good and original films entered in this year's Australian Film Institute awards." Speaking of which, notable offbeat features this year include Proof and Spotswood, both shot in Melbourne.

Noted film educator dies

A feature of Professor Arthur Knight's film classes at the University of Southern California were the Friday night guest appearances by leading Hollywood personnel, among them Alfred Hitchcock. Professor Knight, author of 'The Liveliest Art' and a regular film reviewer for various media, retired in 1985 after serving 25 years on the USC faculty.

His students at USC included directors John Carpenter, Richard Franklin, Randal Kleiser, George Lucas and Richard Zameckis.

Sadly, in July Professor Knight died in Sydney, Australia, where he'd been living.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Prince, Stephen: 'The Warrior's Cinema: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa' (Princeton University Press, 1991; paperback)

It's now 40 years since Rashomon won the Grand Prix at Venice and the West discovered Kurosawa. Although he is probably the only Japanese film director whose name is widely known and whose work is regularly screened outside Japan (nowadays on television rather than cinema screens), since 1965 there had been no comprehensive study in English of his work. Granted, there had been volumes of articles on the significance of Rashomon and thousands of reviews of individual films (at the time of their release) but no comprehensive survey until now that incorporated the methodologies of '70s and '80s film scholarship.

Stephen Prince's book covers all the films directed by Kurosawa, generally but not always in chronological order of production. It also includes finely argued appraisals of the influences on Kurosawa's work: his alleged humanism and the American Western. It traces various stages in the director's career, under different historical and personal imperatives, stressing in particular the major shift from his early postwar optimism to later disillusion and despair. If this account sounds familiar, Prince's treatment of it is not: he argues from a close reading of the texts that many of the films display unresolved cultural and aesthetic tensions and that in them competing voices jostle for attention. While he applauds the formal dynamism, heroic sensibility and social commitment of the late '40s and '50s works, he identifies a political weakness in Kurosawa's reliance on the isolated autonomous self that prefigures the later decline into pathetic pessimism.

Prince's approach is a neat combination of interpretation - the hermeneutic tradition - and formalism. He gives detailed attention to the narrative, thematic, ideological and formal construction of the films, drawing on other critics' interpretations as well as the type of formal analysis performed by scholars like Noël Burch and David Bordwell. (Unfortunately, the close analysis in this book lacks visual illustration.) Prince argues that Kurosawa's distinctive use of the telephoto lens, multicamera filming and cinemascope composition form "a coherent visual system ... The attributes of this system - the two-dimensionality of space, the analytic treatment of movement, the dialectic between space and motion, and the conversion of time into space - challenge the continuity codes and the stable, centered spaces of the Hollywood cinema." However, Prince also concludes that "the subversive potentials of this visual system ... are recouped and reorganized [i.e. modified] by narratives that substitute ethical dilemmas for political ones and displace structural relations of power onto individual personalities." (p.175)

Although Prince argues that Kurosawa's cinema is instructive in that "it clarifies the limitations of a particular kind of political filmmaking" (p.31), the trajectory of Prince's own narrative does still tend to reproduce a story of heroic individual endeavour ending in tragic failure - which is not only the theme of both Kuroswa's films and his life story but also a feature of the Romantic conception of the artist. It is very difficult to avoid falling into the trap of representing the artist as tragic hero in the case of Kurosawa but it is even more difficult if you confine yourself to his life and films. Though Prince discusses the Kurosawa texts with reference to Japanese culture (bushido, Zen Buddhism, Noh) and Japanese history, as well as to Dostoievsky, Brecht, Eisenstein, Hollywood codes, modernism and cubism, a certain hermeticism remains. What is missing is the industrial context: how Kurosawa reworked and/or redefined the generic conventions of the local film industry; how his work relates to that of his professional peers, contemporary Japanese directors and predecessors; intended and actual audiences for his films at home; the place of stars in his cinema; the dramatic historical changes that the Toho company underwent during his employment with them. By removing Kurosawa and his films from their industrial context, Prince leaves us with an isolated artist hero who overdoses on Dostoievsky novels, silent film classics, Hollywood westerns, Zen and the art of samurai sangfroid.

Despite its astute appraisals and impressive analyses, despite its felicities of style, there is little here to tell us why and how Kurosawa films might have a strong appeal to popular audiences, not just to intellectuals and film scholars. There are hints, such as when Prince writes of Rashomon that "the flamboyance of the imagery" contests with "the hysteria of the performances" (p.134). But overall Prince is not interested in film as an interactive social practice, as popular culture, as a site of cultural production and consumption. He, like Noël Burch, may find Ikiru a Kurosawa masterpiece but to popular audiences it is not identifiable as a Kurosawa film because it doesn't star Toshiru Mifune, it isn't a samurai movie, and it is not full of action. The quintessential Kurosawa movie is marked by extravagant acting and bravura camerawork. The characters in a Kurosawa movie do not simply walk and talk; they strut, glower, bluster, thunder, cringe, splutter, snort, titter, snigger, simper and cower. The stories, too, are far removed from everyday domestic and work routines; they are histrionic encounters between heroes and their adversaries - villains, witches, Nature, Fate and Evil - designed to test their masculine strength and stamina, and to display their superiority in character and swordsmanship to the astonished audience in the film and the delighted audience in the cinema. However, without the presence of Mifune, the Kurosawa movie is bloodless (figuratively speaking). No other actor, in Japan or Hollywood, can match his staggering performances of swaggering machismo.

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Naremore, James: 'Acting in the Cinema' (University of California Press, 1988; paperback)

Mid-way through Charles Chaplin's The Gold Rush (1925), everything stops for the famous 'dance of the bread rolls'. Part of a dream in which Charlie imagines he's entertaining The Girl (Georgia Hale), the dance is that of two bread rolls manipulated like feet at the end of a pair of forks held by Charlie. Its effect is both delightful and complex. But Professor Naremore is up to describing every nuance. For example:

> As usual, there is a comic distance between [Charlie's] shabby appearance and his grand theatrical manner, but more specifically, he gets laughs out of the contrast between the high seriousness of his face and the jazzy, cartoonish look of his dancing "feet". Besides foolishness, there is considerable wit in the performance, which contains a number of clear reversals or sudden changes of dancing style, all of them executed with graceful dexterity.

In its show-stopping effect, the Chaplin scene may be said to stand for the bravura that Hollywood producer John Houseman associated with star quality. With Katherine Hepburn in mind, he once listed bravura as the extra something that audiences expect from stars besides beauty, intelligence and energy. In turn, every star role needs these peaks. In George Cukor's Holiday (1938), such a peak arrives when Hepburn and Cary Grant together perform an elaborate double somersault.

The Chaplin scene further derives its effect from the expressive discrepancy between Charlie's face and 'feet'. Broadly speaking, much of its bravura results from the performer, in classic theatrical style, doing two things at once. When Naremore turns to Hitchcock's Rear Window (1954), he singles out Thelma Ritter (playing James Stewart's nurse/masseuse) for a similar accomplishment. Typically, we watch her "not only making a bed but delivering long comic speeches that provide important exposition. (Throughout all this, Stewart plays the straight man, looking bored or pained ...)". As Naremore says, Ritter here executes "everything with a gusto and strength somewhat different from her other Hollywood roles", which may remind us that Hitchcock movies often draw no hard and fast distinction between stars and character actors (vide Lifeboat).

Further, it clearly doesn't matter that Chaplin's soulful face and the insouciant bread rolls may seem to make unconnected, even contradictory, statements. Naremore is alert to how audiences have "learned to read certain types of expressive incoherence as a sign of psychological complexity, so that [typically] the dual faces of the actor function much like irony or ambiguity in written language". In D.W.Griffith's True Heart Susie (1919), during its engagement-party sequence, Lillian Gish uses a fan as if it were a film 'wipe' in order to pass between her 'private' and 'public' expressions. And in Jean-Luc Godard's Breathless (1959), the Jean Seberg character similarly (if more subtly) presents us with one expression while reading a newspaper article, and quite another when she looks up. At this point her face assumes "the mask of a sweetly pretty Midwestern girl", able to speak a lie with barely "a shadow of unease to break her calm".

A variant on the idea of expressive incoherence - and duplicity - is contained in the famous 'Kuleshov effect': "anyone who has ever worked at a movie-editing table knows that a wide range of meanings or nuances ... can be produced through the cutting". From this it's but a step to the "fetishistic" performing of Marlene Dietrich in Joseph von Sternberg's Morocco (1930), where the audience waits, deliciously tantalised, "for what is promised but neither revealed nor exposed" (Bill Nichols). Here's Naremore: "The laziest gal in town, [Dietrich] was sexy precisely because of the way she threatened to expose the illusion of the performance." Certainly, when Hitchcock did expose it, in Stage Fright (1950), by shooting Dietrich's act from a stage hand's perspective in the wings of the theatre, the effect was intentionally comic, and demystifying.

Speaking of theatre, there's an additional aspect of the bread rolls scene, which concerns its pathos:

> Most of all, the scene derives its pathos from Chaplin's saddened, highly sensitive visage above the dancing forks. It sets him against a dark limbo that functions like the background of a puppet theater, with his head spotlighted by a circle of light so that his face becomes a central part of the drama.

Naremore sees that Chaplin in this scene is really three people, with Chaplin himself occupying the apex of a pyramid which consists also of the character he plays and the performer that the character imagines himself to be ... All told, it's "as if Chaplin were simultaneously putting on an act and revealing the essence of his soul". But, then, that's theatricality in a nutshell. In both life and in the movies, to put on an act is to present one's character; and all actorly emotion is either witnessable or it's nothing. At least, Naremore is happy to quote the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-61) to that effect: "Anger, shame, hate, and love are not psychic facts hidden at the bottom of another's consciousness: they are types of behaviour or styles of conduct which are visible from the outside. They exist on this face or in these gestures, not hidden behind them". Regular 'MacGuffin' readers will recognise here an idea of Gilbert Ryle (1900-76) whom I quoted when writing about Stage Fright a couple of issues ago. My point now being (in part) how much the Chaplin scene anticipates Hitchcock's film about the emboldening power of theatre ...

* * *

There's much more to Naremore's book. The paradox involved in 'duplicitous' role-playing receives its due in the final chapter, which deals with Martin Scorsese's The King of Comedy (1983). Naremore describes the restaurant scene where, out of focus in the background, an extra named Chuck Low mimics Robert De Niro's every gesture: "In effect, Low acts just like De Niro, who is acting like a man who is acting like a show-business personality." To those offended by some of Scorsese's "bent pleasures" in shocking his audiences, or otherwise making them sit up, this bizarre episode doubtless provides further ammunition. On the other hand, Naremore's assessment of The King of Comedy may just be nearer the mark: "A modernist (and sometimes postmodernist) film, it continually makes use of parody or pastiche, foregrounding the work of performers and playfully undermining every form of behavioral sincerity." Co-starring Jerry Lewis, it's a film at once of the theatrical Chaplinesque tradition and a reflexive pronouncement on that tradition.

Now, I don't know Naremore's reaction to the new film Truth or Dare/In Bed with Madonna (Alex Keshishian, 1990), but you may find a clue in the section of his book called "What is Acting?". "Unplotted theatrics can partake of acting," he writes, "as when rock musicians like Madonna and Prince develop a persona that has narrative implications; but to be called an actor in the sense I am using, a performer [need only be] ... embedded in a story." To a degree, that gives Chuck Low or Madonna equal status with Robert De Niro. We seem to have arrived at a new era of surfaces, authorised by philosophers like the already-quoted Merleau-Ponty (whom Godard read). Indeed, Naremore comments that the same argument of Merleau-Ponty about all emotions being witnessable "could be made in semiotic terms, forcing us to abandon the notion of a Stanislavskian 'subtext.'"

I do have a few problems with Naremore's book, perhaps related to what I've just said. It's obvious that the author writes perceptively. And, in a sense, thoughtfully. Yet long descriptive passages go by that only paraphrase the surface of the film in question. You read them expecting an insight which isn't there. Even the enthusiastic coverage of Chaplin's bread rolls scene ends before the significance of the theatrical metaphors, so well spelt out, can be investigated. What, if anything, is implied by "a dark limbo that functions like the background of a puppet theater"? Whence, figuratively speaking, comes the spotlight that illuminates Chaplin's saddened face? Surely the answers would bear directly on the scene's pathos?

And does Cary Grant in Hitchcock's North by Northwest (1959) really perform any sort of "homage to Chaplin" in a couple of the Chicago scenes, notably in the station washroom where he must use a lady's razor? His giving himself a Hitlerian/Chaplinesque 'moustache' here is already a matter of interpretation; its being a homage, high speculation. (The scene itself, by the way, derives from Graham Greene's 'The Confidential Agent'.)

Lastly, I suppose everyone who reads this book will wish that certain favourite actors weren't omitted. I would like to have seen some 'foreign' actors covered (apart from the book's passing references to Laurence Olivier). Also, say, Mickey Rooney (not least for his Bill films made for TV). And Ingrid Bergman - though we've already had Robin Wood and others do that splendidly. To be fair, Naremore apologises for having to eliminate such people as Barbara Stanwyck and the negro actor Richard Pryor, the latter seeming "to me more gifted than Chaplin but whose best work has been done in concert films".

Need I add that this is a basic text for anyone who's even slightly interested in the performance aspect of American movies and, as such, is fully recommended?

K.M.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The book and the film: Hitchcock's Number 17; classic Hollywood composers; book reviews (e.g. 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited'); the production process illuminated. Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items are solicited.

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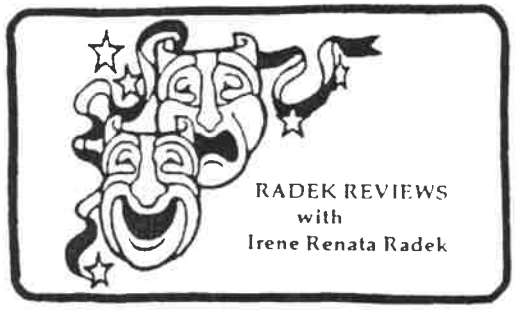

"MADONNA'S MOCKUMENTARY" Last night I saw Madonna's Truth or Dare (d. Alex Keshishian) and a preview for Mannequin on the Move ... or was that the other way around? It was really hard to tell. Truth or Dare (or In Bed with Madonna as it is more appropriately named overseas) is a self-serving look at Madonna's 1990 Blonde Ambition world tour with a mixture of black and white backstage footage trying hard to look spontaneously artsy and colour concert footage trying hard to look innovatively provocative.

After sitting through this 2 hour commercial shot/directed by 26 year old video-director Keshishian, I don't recall more than a hint of honest spontaneity. Not surprising, since there is no room for such honourable qualities when one is actively manipulating the press and public - Madonna's greatest skill.

The only apparent 'truth' seems to be that Madonna is a spoiled, vulgar shrew who's frantically trying to be today's Marilyn Monroe - a misunderstood little girl/sex goddess. Instead, Madonna comes across as a steroidal, manufactured Marilyn clone, tough and angry like a sexual Robocop.

To wit: we get to see Madonna - who claims she absolutely does not care what people think of her - sulk and rant about some poker-faced guys in the audience. If there is truth in hypocrisy, it's here in spades!

'Media Manipulation' 101 at the University of Madonna teaches that being offensive and irreverent attracts a lot of attention. However, it seems to ignore the fact that the line is very fine between art for art's sake and fabrication for shock value. Madonna U. specialises in the latter. Why else her Jesus t-shirt, the sacrilegious mix of sex and religion in the church-set performances of "Like a Prayer" and "Live to Tell", and her pre-show 'prayer circles' (please God, help me to mock you in public ...)?

And how about my personal choice for Madonna's most repulsive remark to date: "Build an altar to me in your home and worship it daily" ... the scariest aspect is that I think she really means it.

Madonna also seems to believe that it's shockingly admirable to insult fellow celebrities like talk-show super-host Oprah Winfrey and Zsa Zsa Gabor whom she openly calls a "cochon". (I think it's time for Ms Gabor to head back to court - only this time as plaintiff.)

And who better to ridicule than Oscar-winner Kevin Costner (Dances With Wolves), a sweet unassuming guy who makes the grievous error of describing Madonna's show as "neat". "Anyone who thinks my show is 'neat' has gotta go", the Grande Dame announces after making an exaggerated gagging gesture behind Costner's departing back. Real class, Madonna, and again, it's commendable that you really don't care what people think ...

Furthermore, Madonna manages to publicly emasculate then-boyfriend, Hollywood legend Warren Beatty, by ordering him around and calling him a "pussy" and an "asshole". In what is probably the MOST truthful

fragment of Truth or Dare, Beatty zeros in on Madonna's complete lack of interest in off-camera existence: what's the point of doing or saying anything if it's not for the camera?, he jeers, reading her mind. I wanted to applaud for the only time during the entire film.

Though Truth or Dare focuses heavily on Madonna's family, I doubt very much that they feel honoured. Brother Chris who tours with Madonna comes across as dimwitted, like the rest of her entourage. Other brother Marty (whose alcoholism Madonna discusses at length but without depth) dashes in to visit his beloved sister at her hotel but arrives after she's retired. It seems a mite convenient that Keshishian hung around in Madonna's hallway after boss-lady had gone to bed just in case Marty did show up so he could film Marty not being able to get into Madonna's room. If this scene weren't prearranged, I'm sure Mr Director would've found something better to do - like sleeping or at least turning off his camera ...

Madonna's father gets an onstage "Happy Birthday" complete with his 'daring' daughter bowing at his embarrassed feet. Then, in conversation with her No.1 stooge, actress Sandra Bernhard, Madonna jokes that her Dad sexually assaulted her as a little girl. Ha, ha, Madonna, I'm sure your father will really appreciate your rapier wit - not to mention the respect you show him, now filmed for posterity.

Finally, Madonna visiting her mother's grave strikes me as the most staged segment of Truth or Dare. Mrs Ciccone's wayward daughter even admits that she hasn't paid her respects since she was a little girl ... so why does she do it now? Mr Beatty knows ... As Madonna lay prostrate upon her mother's grave, I kept expecting the earth to move as an offended Mrs Ciccone spun around below. What's that Biblical quotation, Madonna (since you're such an authority on religion), "Take heed that ye do not give alms before men, to be seen of them"? ...

In a squirmingly pathetic scene, Madonna's childhood friend is interviewed about her famous friend's claims that they experimented sexually with each other as children. After this public humiliation, Madonna's minion seeks her out and begs Madonna to be her unborn child's godmother! After promising to name the baby after her (I pity the babe if it's a boy!), this sad sack pleads with Madonna to bless her unborn child. Just the thought that someone would actually consider Madonna worthy of blessing her unborn baby makes my skin crawl ... the kid'll probably make Rosemary's Baby look like Heidi.

Another major Madonna cause is the Gay Movement - an already controversial area filled with potential shock value. So maternal Madonna pats herself on the back for mothering her poor "emotionally crippled" (?!) dancers (all but one are gay), and giggles when told that her makeup artist was raped the night before. Who did you say was emotionally crippled, Madonna?

Madonna claims that Truth or Dare is "a celebration of love, life and humanity". But what exactly is she celebrating? Terminal vulgarity? A dancer exposing himself and 2 men soul-kissing at her command? Trying to seduce a married man in front of his wife? Or how about simulating oral sex with a bottle? Such activities may be part of some degenerate's life but they have nothing to do with love and very little to do with humanity.

"I do not endorse a way of life but describe one", she announces to Italian reporters when the Vatican cancels 2 of her concerts. But, Madonna, all the little Madonna wanna-bes will want to emulate you, their heroine, so by describing your way of life you cannot help but endorse it.

So where exactly is the truth in Truth or Dare? Watching makeupless Madonna slurping soup with a plastic cup on her head? Wow. Madonna flashing her breasts for the camera? You could see more in the recent 'Playboy' spread. How about her employees' laudatory voice-overs? Yeah, right. They sound more like scripted testimonials by submissive sycophants who, lacking lives/minds of their own, fasten onto their esteemed Queen Bee for identity. Besides, it's career insurance.

However, if you're a major Madonna fan and if sincerity is not vital to you, the music is great and most of the concert footage is quite entertaining (though a little too risqué for young, impressionable minds) - even though much of Madonna's singing sounds exactly like the recording (ergo, it's taped) and looks lip-synched ("Express Yourself", "Vogue", "Keep It Together"). It's virtually impossible for anyone to sing so steadily and clearly whilst dancing and contorting with abandon. Even the best singer's voice would be detrimentally affected and, as Madonna herself admits, she's just not that good a singer.

And there's more than a hint of humour when Madonna's back-up singers, Niki Harris and Donna Delory, imitate the lamb-like vocal bleatings of singer Belinda Carlisle. But there again Madonna attempts to make herself look 'good' by insulting the competition. Petty.

The name of a film company in the film's opening credits, 'Propaganda Films', says it all. There's just no room for truth or spontaneity in Madonna's carefully planned career. Madonna admits that she's "just interested in pushing people's buttons" - consequently there is no art here, just audience manipulation and pure calculated hype.

One of Madonna's lackeys claims she's just like "a little girl lost in a storm". Hardly. Madonna is a tough, shrewd businesswoman contriving her own tempest for which she has drawn herself a detailed navigational map. My conclusion: save your $$ and rent Spinal Tap instead. It's considerably more fun and probably a lot more honest.

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['Radek Reviews' welcomes correspondence. Write to either 'The MacGuffin' (address on back page) or direct to Irene Renata Radek, 3 Louisa Drive, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1E 4T4.]

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The Dark Side of Genius: Hitchcock's 'Psycho'

The entry in 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature' on the 'metaphysical' poet Henry Vaughan (1621-95) says that he "was seized with the idea of childish innocence, and the child's recollections of pre-natal glory". Vaughan's 'The Retreate' begins:

> Happy those early dayes! when I
> Shin'd in my Angell-infancy.
> Before I understood this place
> Appointed for my second race,
> Or taught my soul to fancy ought
> But a white, Celestiall thought ...

The poem was published in the two volumes collectively called 'Silex Scintillans' (1650, 1655), making it contemporaneous with John Milton's sonnet known as 'On His Blindness' (1652). The latter begins:

> When I consider how my light is spent
> Ere half my days in this dark world and wide ... ,

and it ends on a consoling note, the famous line, "'They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

My unlikely purpose in this article is to show not just that Alfred Hitchcock had Milton's sonnet in mind when making Psycho (1960), but that the very imagery and themes of the film echo those used by Milton - and, no doubt inadvertently, Vaughan. In effect, that Hitchcock's film provides a modern commentary on Milton's poem.

The film signals the connection in its opening scene, set in a Phoenix hotel bedroom. When Sam Loomis (John Gavin) tells girlfriend Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) that he resents having to pay off debts to "people who aren't there", she reminds him, "I pay, too. They also pay who meet in hotel rooms." The faint but unmistakable echo of the last line of Milton's sonnet is clearly apt, not least because it underlines the element of waiting which the scene itself seeks to establish: Sam's debts will take at least two years to pay off and until then marriage to Marion is out of the question.

But also, besides various ironies, the line hints at a broader picture for Sam and Marion's problems. In Milton's sonnet the poet has to be reminded by a personified Patience of the true nature of God's kingdom on earth. In the film the allusion to Milton carries a more oblique reminder of the same thing. Hitchcock uses an identical procedure in Marnie (1964) when Mark Rutland misquotes one of Emerson's 'Voluntaries'. The well-known Emerson passage, with its emphasis on Duty, begins: "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man ..."

And again, there had been a foretaste in The Trouble With Harry (1956). As Lesley Brill has pointed out, the earlier film suggestively quotes part of a Shakespeare sonnet ("Let me not to the marriage of true minds/ Admit impediments" - Sonnet 116). But note a paradox. The myopic Doctor Greenbow, stumbling about the autumnal New England countryside reciting poetry, pays no heed to the beauty around him. Nor, most of the time, do the film's two couples whose "true minds" are obviously busy elsewhere. Thus once again Hitchcock posits a more objective, or more poetic, viewpoint than any of his characters attains, or has time for.

* * *

Discussing The Trouble With Harry with Truffaut, Hitchcock specified a use of counterpoint as the means by which that film elevates "the commonplace in life to a higher level". Likewise, in Spellbound (1945), notable for its flirtation with Salvador Dali and surrealism, reality is heightened both photographically and via the use of certain motifs. Dark lines in the lather on a shaving-brush, dark lines on a linen table cloth, above all, dark lines on a field of snow - these marks of trauma accrue a rich meaning from scene to scene. And the symbolism of several of the objects - from a man's cut-throat razor to a glass of milk - is nicely Freudian. But that still leaves the colour white largely unaccounted for. In fact, it never is fully explained in the film. Instead, Hitchcock literally dazzles us with shots of gleaming bathrooms and vast snowfields, and then abandons us to our own devices, as it were.

Now, regular readers of 'The MacGuffin' know how closely I feel Hitchcock's temperament and general outlook approach those of the German philosopher Schopenhauer (1788-1860), whose historical place is between two other German thinkers, the rigorous and ascetic Kant and the poetic Nietzsche. Concerning genius, Schopenhauer said his principal criterion was a capacity to always see the universal in the particular. In contrast, the normal person recognises only the particular, for that alone "has interest for him, has reference to his will [i.e. his personal drives and concerns]". One of the things Schopenhauer felt most bars the normal person from genius is a lack of imagination.

Let's return to Psycho and its likely affinities with Milton's sonnet called 'On His Blindness'.

* * *

Milton wrote his most famous sonnet in the year he became totally blind. In Psycho, everyone is blind. That's to say, blindness in the film serves as a metaphor: the characters are both un-seeing and mortal, and all around them lies "this dark world and wide". Further, they manifestly partake of what Schopenhauer characterised as blindly-striving, predatory Will.

One 'character' is almost literally blind from the start, and that is the dead 'Mrs Bates' with her empty

eye-sockets and grinning skull. Another character, the highway patrolman, who might be Marion's conscience, wears dark glasses that suggest a blind man's; yet his professional stare at Marion in her car blinds her, i.e. confuses her, as surely as do the headlights of oncoming cars during her long drive to Fairvale. In turn, those unblinking lights evoke "the cruel eyes" that Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) associates with mental institutions. So do his own eyes when they study Marion through a spy-hole in the motel wall. Importantly, Hitchcock turns the tables on us with the bathroom murder, not least because during shooting he insisted on using "blinding white tiles".

Both murders in Psycho are virtual blindings. As Marion is stabbed in the shower, her eyes close and her mouth opens in a succession of screams and gasps. Dark blood splashes on the white porcelain and is washed down the drain; a close-up of the plughole echoes the close-up of Marion's initial scream. In turn, the shot of the plughole dissolves to a close-up of one of Marion's now staring, but un-seeing, eyes. As for the private detective, Arbogast (whose first name, curiously, in both the original novel and Hitchcock's film, is Milton), he dies after being slashed by a knife which travels the length of his face, passing directly across his left eye. In this, there's an anticipation of the death of the farmer in The Birds, both of whose eyes are pecked out.

When Arbogast had entered the Bates house he'd removed his hat and exposed his balding forehead - a gesture not just inviting of what followed but reminiscent of someone entering a church. Thus, just before their respective deaths, both Marion and Arbogast appear at their most vulnerable - and innocent. Such innocence goes with the blindness motif. Even Deputy Sheriff Chambers and his wife fail to imagine Norman Bates as anything but a harmless young man. At one point we see the Chambers couple come out from attending a service at their local Fairvale church; among other members of the congregation is a myopic-looking man who for the remainder of the scene stays chatting with the pastor on the church steps.

If that scene could almost have come from David Lynch's Blue Velvet (1986), which is another film about psychotic violence and small-town complacency, so could the scene set in Sam Loomis's hardware store where a customer comments on a brand of pesticide, "They don't tell you whether it's painless" - then buys it anyway.

As played by John Gavin (Imitation of Life, Spartacus), Loomis is the epitome of practical seriousness, what the Romans called gravitas. Most of Fairvale's citizens have that quality. We may also see it in Lila Crane. However, its opposite is given no exact representative in the film - though Marion and Norman come closest - and may be summed up as the quality of imagination. That's to say, it's something which Schopenhauer regarded as "an indispensable instrument of genius". Round about here you start to grasp how crucial the blindness theme is to Hitchcock's film.

If gravitas, writes Schopenhauer, "presupposes that the intellect does not forsake the service of the will", i.e. is always concerned with practical self-interest, the condition of genius is its capacity to unfetter the intellect from the will "in order to follow its own ends". Moreover:

> In this way, it often leaves the will very inopportunely in the lurch; and ... the individual so gifted becomes more or less useless for life; in fact, by his conduct we are sometimes reminded of madness.

Which may return us to Milton. Now, we don't know that as his blindness worsened the poet ever approached madness; on the contrary, A.N.Wilson's 'Life' speculates that with his "inner sense of his own righteousness" he stood firm. Nevertheless, what the sonnet itself records are Milton's feelings of waste and of being made "useless", inducing in him "fond" thoughts. And it's to this condition that the poem addresses itself when it counsels an almost supra-human "patience". The point for Psycho-analysts is that Milton's sonnet is about a cruel blow that in many people might be expected to cause despair, even madness, but that in his case spurred him to resume his writing, to affirm an exalted religious faith, and eventually to produce 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' ...

* * *

In Hitchcock's wartime Saboteur (1942) the blind Philip Martin calls policemen "unimaginative", implying that he's something of a surrogate for the filmmakers. But he also advises the young hero, whose name is

(Barry) Kane, to "go and do the things I cannot do" - for instance, woo the girl, who happens to be Philip Martin's niece, by foiling a nest of fifth columnists. There's an implicit Oedipal paradox here, just as in Psycho where it has literally driven Norman crazy. To act or not to act. Milton's sonnet, too, turns on this dilemma. A key passage (lines 9-11) sets side by side the two halves of a central Christian paradox: (1) that God insists on man's engaging in the work of His kingdom, (2) that God needs nothing man can do or give. Hence the sonnet's conclusion:

> " ... His state
> Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
> They also serve who only stand and wait."

Milton is saying that there are two orders of angels. Thousands of the most common kind speed about the world in obedience to God's commands. But the highest orders merely "wait" upon Him, in the two senses of 'stay expectant' and 'attend'.

Marion Crane and her sister Lila are like the lower order of angels. Clearly not because the two of them are obedient - they aren't - but because they will not "stand and wait". As Lila says, "Patience doesn't run in my family". Time and again, the script stresses as much. Whereas Loomis is "all for" respectability - which simply "requires patience, temperance ... hard work" - Marion one day yields to impulse and absconds with $40,000 of her boss's money. After her murder, her sister comes searching for her in Fairvale and is trailed by Arbogast. The scene in which Lila and Sam await Arbogast's return from the Bates Motel both begins and ends with virtually the identical line, Lila's asking "are we just going to sit here and wait?"

In visual terms, too, the film more or less depicts Marion and Lila as angels. Marion dies beneath a rounded shower nozzle (another effect that Hitchcock insisted on) which bestows on her a halo. Earlier, as she had conversed with Norman in his parlour, she had sat under a picture showing a cluster of ascending angels. A close-up of the picture, at the start of the sequence, had been especially proleptic: it had shown one of Norman's stuffed birds, a black crow with menacing beak, poised alongside, as if waiting to strike ...

As for Lila, every time she visits the Loomis store the film goes out of its way to photograph her beneath a cluster of garden rakes. The result is a nimbus-effect about her head. On the Saturday night when she and Sam wait for Arbogast, cigarette smoke hangs in the air around her (but not around Sam). Back-lighting catches her hair. The rakes appear in the background, as usual. In effect, Lila is given an effulgence, as in certain religious pictures, though the exalted effect is simultaneously played down by the circumstances: Marion's and Arbogast's ominous disappearances, the claustrophobic store room setting, Lila's rather plain hair-style and the severe cut of her tweedy suit ...

All this 'quoting' by Hitchcock's film is surely neither meaningless nor just irony. Rather, what it suggests is an elusive, though intentional, sense of meaning which has connotations of the numinous (such as Dali often employed). Implicit, too, is a possible Miltonic triumph to come. It's time we looked at the sonnet in its entirety.

* * *

Milton's poem, full of paradox, intimating both mortality and immortality, begins with a long subordinate clause (the first six lines):

> When I consider how my light is spent
> Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
> And that one talent which is death to hide
> Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
> To serve therewith my Maker, and present
> My true account, lest He returning chide,
> "Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
> I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
> That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Anticipating Psycho, the early part of the poem makes play with references to money and notions of worth. Milton invokes the parable of the talents. He asks, in effect, whether because of his blindness and his seeming inability to return interest on his "one talent", God will impose on him a living death, that of a hired labourer who must physically toil to ensure even a day's wage. (Not all of this, one supposes, accords with orthodox Puritan teaching.) Wrapped in both inner and outer darkness - and likening his soul to a flame without substance - the poet more than ever longs to present his "true account". Seeing this, and anticipating his cry of despair - or chagrin - Patience reminds him of the true nature of God's sovereignty.

One can imagine each of the principal characters in Psycho taking Milton's poem to heart. For the moment, let's consider Marion and her possible motivations. Foremost among these is surely her wish to be married and to become a mother. As Hitchcock told Truffaut, Marion is "a perfectly ordinary bourgeoise". Not a genius - nor an artist nor a saint - she's just a 27-year-old single woman for whom boyfriend Sam may represent her last chance to attain respectability. Above all, Sam may represent her only chance to mother a child and realise her "one talent". As Marion packs a suitcase before fleeing with the $40,000, the camera notes the family pictures on the wall. The most prominent, adjoining the clothes closet, is a photo of a baby (presumably Marion herself). For her, then, the stolen money already represents having a child, and secure parenthood. After all, it had belonged to the oil-lease man, Cassidy, who had boasted about "buying off unhappiness" by purchasing a house for "my sweet little girl ... my baby".

In her right mind, Marion knows that "buying off unhappiness" isn't as easy as it sounds. Nevertheless, her whole environment invites risk-taking and speculation (as in the parable of the talents). The very pictures on the real estate office walls - vibrant vistas of rivers and deserts - are arousing, and imply the possibility of a better life. One day, Marion finds that she is prepared to overlook some essential distinctions, such as between honesty and dishonesty. Losing "patience", she takes the money and runs. Later, like Milton after he'd had his "fond" thoughts, she appears to regain her senses, and sits at the desk in her motel room to present her "true account", i.e. work out how much she must raise to repay the full amount stolen. But for her, it's too late.

As if to underline the finality of Marion's death, Hitchcock doesn't spare us the sight of her body wrapped in its makeshift shroud of a shower curtain and, nearby, the money wrapped in its own shroud of newspaper. The latter package carries the further pathos of being like the baby that Marion never had. As their shared coffin - the $700 car - sinks into a stinking swamp, phrases like "filthy lucre" must seem appropriate.

Elaborating Freud's concept of 'Character and Anal Eroticism', Ferenczi once called money "odourless dehydrated filth that has been made to shine". Even so, Ferenczi's 'shocking' comment sounds almost Puritanical, and it's interesting that Marion's bloody murder in the gleaming motel bathroom is ambiguous. From a Miltonic perspective, we must hope that Marion died in a state of grace. Perhaps in the end she really did find the innocence, or redemption, she sought. (Likewise, we'll need to consider below the possible religious connotations of Norman's last appearance in the film.) From another perspective, Marion is a sacrificial victim. In Hitchcock's The Lodger (1926) the murdered sister has a comparable function, allowing the story its apparent happy ending when the brother marries the look-alike Daisy. In fact, my 'overall' interpretation below of Psycho simply shifts the happy ending to a context beyond the film.

But to sum up this stage of the argument, consider again the snowfield scenes in Spellbound, set in a place called Gabriel Valley. Site of one man's murder, the snowfield also allows another man's eventual redemption. The predominant activity in these scenes is skiing, symbolising the possibility of both death and re-birth. So it shouldn't surprise us to learn that the allusion to the archangel Gabriel in the valley's name is ambiguous. Sometimes seen as a figure of death, Gabriel was more frequently thought of as one of God's chief messengers. Milton makes him the chief of the angelic guards placed over Paradise ...

* * *

I want to focus now on Psycho's ending and a contention of critic Robin Wood. Wood, much influenced by another psychoanalytic text, Norman O.Brown's 'Life Against Death', once wrote that "there can be no Heaven corresponding to Hitchcock's Hell". Well, he may be right, and certainly Milton's (Hitchcock's?) "dark world and wide" implies Satan's supremacy on earth. But let's not forget that poems, like films, are by and large made by creative people. The very act of creation may give the artist the taste of Heaven that - in this case - Robin Wood would deny him.

Further, Schopenhauer suggests that an artist, especially one of genius, may gain special insights into general truths. In writing 'On His Blindness', Milton not only quelled his "fond" murmurings, he awakened his mind to the actuality: "Who best bear his mild yoke, they serve him best." Granted, there's an element of the patrician about Milton, and very little modern "rage". (Again it could be Hitchcock I'm describing.) Yet the 'truth' of the sonnet is indeed the right one for the poet, as history showed. And the final note of submission is something more again.

Now, the ending of Milton's sonnet prefigures the even more profound submissiveness and stillness one finds in the poet's later works, especially 'Samson Agonistes' with its famous last line:

> And calm of mind, all passion spent.

My interpretation of Psycho's last scenes is that they provide a parody of the 'Miltonic' ending - though the film isn't prepared to settle for just that.

Consider first the scene with the psychiatrist. While he is declaiming on Norman's case history, we may glimpse behind him: a set of old-fashioned filing cabinets, a stilled electric fan, a framed photo of a motor-cycle cop (without goggles), a map of the county. Each object counterpoints an ingredient of an earlier scene, and the effect in each case is demystifying. To take an instance, the contrast between a stilled fan here and a whirring fan in the opening scene practically sums up the general effect, for it signifies the change in the film's weather from sensual autumn heatwave to pre-winter cold.

Notice how a cold wind blows through the second half of Psycho (and, unabated, through The Birds, Marnie and Torn Curtain). At the end of the scene with the psychiatrist, a policeman comes to ask if he may take a blanket to Norman in his cell. Norman, unlike Lila a moment earlier, "feels a little chill". Further, here's how the film's screenplay describes his bare room: "The walls are white and plain. ... The room has a quality of no-whereness, of calm separation from the world." The screenplay reiterates the word "calm" when it continues: "Calmly, Norman places the blanket over his shoulders as if it were a cashmere shawl."

Patently, what this scene represents is the triumph of Freud's death instinct. Like a black hole, the "Mother half" of the character has swallowed up the "Norman half". And it's fitting that, just as the plain white room provides a variant of the gleaming bathroom where Marion died, so Norman's blanket carries a reminder of her shower-curtain shroud.

But once again alternative readings are possible. Norman's cell with its "calm separation from the world", and Norman himself draped in a blanket, have further connotations. The character becomes in the end like a religious hermit or a Buddhist monk. The film had earlier twice referred to Norman's "hermitting". And the Buddhist connotation becomes the more compelling when Norman says he isn't "even going to swat that fly" - picking up on the remark by the customer in the Loomis store, clearly, but also bringing to bear an extra dimension which I've already suggested passes irony.

* * *

Historically, Schopenhauer may have been the first to see how the Christian notion of dying to the world in order to live and the Buddhist notion of 'annihilation' both find an analogue in the liberating abandonment of self that great art may bestow. On this insight he based much of his brilliant Weltanschauung which embraces philosophy, aesthetics and ethics. I have to say that until I read Schopenhauer, and thought further about Psycho, I never understood what Hitchcock meant when he once commented, "Everything's

perverted in a different way". Now I think I understand. And I think Schopenhauer can show us the fullest relevance of Milton's 'On His Blindness' to Psycho.

In Vertigo (1958) Madeleine constantly leads Scottie away from the world's rush to pockets of stillness where time seems suspended and eternity is almost palpable: in a church, an art gallery, an ageless forest. In North by Northwest (1959) Hitchcock parodies the same idea, for whenever Thornhill leaves his familiar offices and streets he finds himself exposed to danger (which, it's hinted, may represent 'the enemy within'). Psycho combines elements of both the earlier films. As I've previously written ('MacGuffin' 1), Vertigo's Scottie, a man of action, can't accept Madeleine's offered solution to "the world riddle", for he is neither artist nor genius nor saint - those people whom Schopenhauer suggests may have the necessary self-abandonment. (However, I dare say that an action-genius, whether a crack racing driver or a dervish, might also qualify.) Likewise, Marion, the "perfectly ordinary bourgeoise", and Norman, who proves to be mad, respectively fall short of, and parody, the quality of genius that someone like Milton knew himself to possess and in adversity found so consoling. Note that the latter's "patience", approaching a saint's, bestowed on him at the moment of writing his poem a quietude inseparable from wisdom.

For the rest of us, even Schopenhauer can only offer, outside the experience of art, the indefinite prospect of a time when our wills may be turned fully around, thereby halting the world's blind striving, suffering and cruelty. Some of Psycho's black-white reversals, and its turning upon its audience, may intimate the same idea. But it's a mark of Hitchcock's intelligence that present-day inequity remains to the fore in this richly realist film.

* * *

Have I in any way refuted Robin Wood's contention that there can be no Heaven corresponding to Hitchcock's Hell? It's worth remembering that Hitchcock always tried to give due weight to the importance of action in the world, as you might expect of a director making films about extroverted Americans. One of his main themes, as I wrote in 'MacGuffin' 2, is "the dangers of merely watching". Yet there remains a sense in which the worldly heroes of Saboteur or North by Northwest are very limited. It has to do with the split in the director between realism and romanticism. The same 'Newsweek' article that quoted Truffaut's remark that Hitchcock "is essentially a romantic" also quoted Hitchcock himself on how, once he's at his desk,

> ... I can be anywhere. I can create the wildest things without being wild. Maugham travelled to Malaya, James Jones to Hawaii. With me, it's imagination, it's supposin'.

Well, The Trouble With Harry is the one Hitchcock film in which Heaven visibly touches the earth, and in practically every respect it's the inverse of Psycho. By the film's end, after suitable collusion between the resident "genius", artist Sam Marlowe, and a benign millionaire (who presumably earns his money from something more ennobling than oil), all concerned are granted their modest requests and, at the same time, a measure of happiness. A sense of renewal fills the air (though winter is surely coming): during the course of the film, everyone seems to grow younger. Everyone, that is, except the already dead, universally detested Harry. Thus the film represents the defeat of the death instinct in love (by the film's couples), in the practice of good works (by the millionaire), and in creativity (by Sam Marlowe and Alfred Hitchcock).

However, the film's setting is New England, after all, the home of the Puritan settlers. Throughout the film, the local church steeple may be glimpsed in the background and the peal of its bell heard. An element of religious faith is not excluded from Hitchcock's film any more than it is from Milton's 'On His Blindness' (though its exact function is ambiguous in both). So let a last word be that of another poet, the American-born T.S.Eliot (1888-1965), for whom "the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting". Eliot, influenced by Schopenhauer and Eastern religious thought, ends his 'Four Quartets' by describing the ideal that awaits "all our exploring":

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything) ...

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'Psycho' man, 76, dies in mental home

NEW YORK, Thurs., AP. — Ed Gein, a farmer whose grisly slayings reportedly inspired the movie "Psycho", died today at a psychiatric institute.

Gein, 76, was found innocent on the grounds of insanity in his only trial, and spent almost all his life after his 1957 arrest in mental institutions.

The events leading to Gein's arrest began in November, 1957, when relatives of Bernice Worden, 58, realised she was missing.

Gein's battered utility had been seen near Mrs Worden's store twice that day, and a county deputy drove to Gein's farm to ask if he had noticed anything. No one was home.

He returned later at the side of the house saw Mrs Worden's body hanging by the heels, decapitated, and dressed like the carcase of a deer.

Authorities found preserved human heads and lampshades and chair seats made out of human skin. One room was boarded off — it had belonged to Gein's mother, who died in 1945. The room was as she left it.

Police accused Gein of robbing the recently-dug graves of women, who like his mother, died in middle age. They found a death mask of a woman who had disappeared three years before. Both she and Mrs Worden were believed to have resembled Gein's mother in his view, authorities said.

Robert Block, the author of the novel on which Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 thriller "Psycho" was based, lived about 80 km from Gein and based his book on the episode, according to the Milwaukee Journal.

The real-life 'Psycho'-killer: Ed Gein

The choice item on the left appeared, misprints and all, in the Melbourne 'Herald' on July 27th, 1984. Continuing our occasional series on crimes that inspired Hitchcock movies, the following additional facts are perhaps the ones bearing most directly on Hitchcock's Psycho and its successors like Jonathan Demme's The Silence of the Lambs.

Ed Gein worked the family farm at Plainfield, Wisconsin. (In Psycho, Norman Bates resides near 'Fairvale', California.)

He was universally liked in the area, and much in demand as a baby-sitter. Colin Wilson ('Order of Assassins') describes him as being of "mild appearance and gentle manner".

He'd lived alone since the death in 1945 of his highly dominant mother, who had been something of a religious maniac and who made her two sons stay away from women.

After the deaths of his mother and his brother within one year, Gein sealed off his mother's room, lived in a small part of the farmhouse and neglected the farm itself.

He took to reading books on the human body, and developed a morbid interest in female anatomy. (When Lila Crane explores the Bates house in Psycho, she opens a book containing pornographic pictures - at least, that's what it contains in Robert Bloch's novel.)

One night, after seeing a newspaper report on the burial of a local woman, Gein went and dug up her body and reburied the empty coffin. (In Psycho, it's his mother's body, of course, that Norman exhumes - or, rather, steals before burial.)

Able at last to satisfy his sexual curiosity at close quarters, Gein took to robbing graves on a regular basis - about one a year, usually at the time of the full moon.

It was but a step from grave-robbing to procuring fresh bodies by murder. Gein's first victim was a 51-year-old woman whom he shot dead in 1954. In 1957 he killed another victim, a woman who ran a local store.

That woman's son was none other than the local Deputy Sheriff. It was he who found her body.

A search of Gein's farm revealed the gruesome ornaments of his perverted pastime. There was, for example, a tom-tom covered with human skin. (This may indicate why Norman in the novel is fascinated with a certain passage from 'The Realm of the Incas' by Victor W. Von Hagen).

Also found were waistcoats of skin, which Gein had worn next to his body. (Such a trait is given to 'Buffalo Bill' in The Silence of the Lambs, where it is explained as a case of the killer wanting to become his victims. On the other hand, noting that both of Gein's murder victims were elderly women, Colin Wilson speculates that "the murders were intended as some kind of act of revenge against his mother".)

Besides murder, grave-robbing and necrophilia, Gein admitted to cannibalism. In December 1957 he was sent to an institution for the criminally insane. The Gein farm at Plainfield was burned down by locals, who regarded it as a place of evil.

K.M.

THE NIGHT SHIFT

(Editor's note. The following trip down memory lane is reprinted from 'Vampire', published by the American Mensa Vampire SIG. Specifically, it was printed there - in a "Gallery of Horror" - in the June 1991 issue.)

June is a warm month in the South, though the nights are still cool enough to be comfortable. June is a month of many traditions. It is the month of marriages, summer vacation, and once, the start of the Drive-in Movie season.

How many memories I have of the Drive-in, and how those memories punctuated the seasons of my life from childhood to youth, to young adulthood.

- A memory of an early night with my parents; the taste of coke, the smell of popcorn, the whirring of cicadas in the summer trees, the traditional lighting of the Pic to drive away the real bloodsucker of the night - the obnoxious mosquito. Perhaps you Northerners have never heard of, or even had the need of, the Pic, but it was a wonder to me; a coil of some unknown green substance that perched upon an aluminum stand. When lit, it would burn for hours driving away the pesky bugs and mixing with the many other odors forming the primal smell of Drive-ins. And then the movie would start and Godzilla would begin to eat Tokyo. But I was safe in the back seat with my cap pistol. Eat hot lead you big lizard! It was the Drive-in!

- A memory of another night with my first real date; a zombie movie was showing, but we only saw the first half-hour of the film, for a huge walking fog rolled in wrapping everything in its wet whiteness. But we talked and laughed and listened to the audio, and had a great time anyway. It was the Drive-in!

- And memory of yet another night with my first serious date; "Dracula, Prince of Darkness" was showing with the great Christopher Lee strolling through the film saying not one word. And this movie also went largely unseen, not because of inclement weather, but because it is almost impossible to watch a film from the back seat of a parked car. It was the Drive-in!

- Last memory of a summer night, driving into my favorite spot slightly behind and to the right of the concession stand; a good strategic location for pit stops and refueling, while keeping a good view of the screen. It had been a long time since I had been there, but I still knew the right moves. I didn't exactly know what was playing, but it was "Dracula something-or-other." I didn't care. It was a clear night, I was with the love of my life, and it was the Drive-in! The movie started and I was shocked to see it was Dracula in triple-X. I soon found that skin flicks were the only thing being shown there now. The shock cut through my denial and I admitted to myself what I had known all along. The Drive-in was dying, and the X-rated movies were its last grasp for survival. In the end, it only postponed the inevitable.

They are all gone now, abandoned to rot and decay, or paved over for parking space. They were swept away by multi-cinemas, VCRs, and rising property taxes and real estate costs. All gone, and a part of me has left with them as well.

But wait! Here in the paper I've found a listing for a Drive-in movie. It says, "Now showing ... on the Night Shift."

Dennis Tallent

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'MacGuffin' 1 included articles on Hitchcock's Vertigo, plus an account of the director making Family Plot.

'MacGuffin' 2 included articles on Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange and Hitchcock's Stage Fright.

'MacGuffin' 3 included articles on Asian Cinema, 'The Hitchcock Romance' and Hitchcock's The Lodger.

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ODD SPOT: NOT THE WHOLE STORY

(Be warned: this item isn't for the squeamish. The information comes from Professor Peter Singer's 'Animal Liberation', 2nd Edition, and from other sources.)

In 1985, Dr Donald Barnes resigned from the US Air Force and blew the whistle on several grossly cruel experiments being performed with monkeys at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.

In 1987, Hollywood director Jonathan Kaplan based the plot of his film Project X on the experiments, suggesting that they were of dubious validity and graphically showing the use of a flight simulator to expose chimpanzees to lethal doses of radiation.

But the reality is worse:

1. The simulator is also used to test exposure to the deadly nerve gas Soman, said to have caused terrible agony to troops in the First World War.

2. In order to operate the simulator correctly, the monkeys receive preliminary training involving hundreds of electric shocks.

3. The shocks continue during the actual experiments - even when the animals are nauseous and dying.

* One other thing cinema audiences didn't see. During the film's making, the principal chimp had his back broken, reportedly by his trainer, and was 'put down'.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 5 November, 1991 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £2.50

EDITORIAL

'The MacGuffin' is a year old. Thanks to all of you who have lent it your support. May our second year vindicate our first!

Here's a query to Australian readers. Does anyone know of a would-be specialist columnist? I'm looking for a willing person to provide us with regular coverage of new Australian movies.

Now, about this issue. At the very least, it draws a few threads together. For instance, I've just noticed how Laurence Giavarini's description (see 'News') of Peter Weir's early films raises notions of 'the uncanny' like those discussed back in 'MacGuffin' 2. In turn, Giavarini's comments bear on Hitchcock's Rebecca (and even more, Vertigo) which figures several times this issue.

And again, Maxim de Winter (Laurence Olivier) in Rebecca epitomises what critic Robin Wood calls the monogamous male heterosexual of our patriarchal culture. So much so, that when Maxim learns of the (in Freud's words) "polymorphous perversity" of his first wife, he's literally shocked. Both Daphne du Maurier's novel and Hitchcock's film may be said to hinge on a resultant 'danger', namely, that Maxim won't fulfil his expected role of patriarch/father ... Hence our 'News' item referring to Olivier and du Maurier carries a touch of irony. And then there's our book review of Wood's 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' ...

Speaking of gender matters, critic Adrian Martin has sent us a review of the deftly-titled He Said, She Said. Adrian's stimulating comments reflect his knowledge of contemporary and classic Hollywood movies and their rich "intertextual" meanings.

Also in this issue, Ronald Conway evokes the work of those leading Hollywood composers, Erich Korngold, Max Steiner and Franz Waxman; Irene Radek reviews actor/director Kenneth Branagh's latest film, Dead Again - which clearly owes some of its plot and effects to Hitchcock's Spellbound and Marnie; and there's a long analysis of Hitchcock's 1932 comedy-thriller, No. 17, an early exercise by its director in creating madcap confusion. The print of No. 17 discussed here was screened in Australia by the Channel 9 network, but I understand that the film is available in the US on video.

Special thanks this time must go to our letter-writers for making the 'Letters' pages particularly readable and informative (see if you don't agree).

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. No, I haven't forgotten that Maxim in Rebecca kills his first wife. But I don't believe that's what causes his state of shock. Rather, the shock already exists, as does Maxim's hate (that was once love).

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Note. A contents index for 'The MacGuffin', issues 1-4, is on page 21.

LETTERS

Christine Matthews, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.

I'm interested in 'The MacGuffin' because (1) I am a great fan of Hitchcock, and (2) I like movies, any movies (well, almost).

My favourite Hitchcock: Notorious.

My favourite movie/s: Citizen Kane, Casablanca, To Have and Have Not, Chinatown, Chariots of Fire, Dead Poets Society. (Sorry, too hard to name just one.)

(Editor's note. Christine is one of our Australian Mensa members. Thanks for your letter, Christine. Everyone seems to have a different favourite Hitchcock! Don Gilbert, I know, favours Shadow of a Doubt. Evan Williams, whose letter on Psycho follows, likes The Lady Vanishes. I prefer Vertigo. What about some of you other readers? Send along your favourite film lists! Incidentally, I can endorse most of Christine's non-Hitchcock favourites - except perhaps Chariots of Fire. That seems to me too much like an 'advertisement for myself' made by a committee called 'England'!)

* * *

Evan Williams, Lindfield, New South Wales, Australia

Your article on Psycho in 'MacGuffin' 4 prompts me to make a point about that film that has long been in my mind, but which I have not seen made before in all the literature on the subject. Was Hitchcock at any time during the film really trying to conceal the identity of the killer, or was he not content that we should guess - or even know - that the murderer is Norman?

The silhouetted figure with the upraised knife that appears clearly before Marion in the shower, and the less shadowy figure seen running from the bathroom after the murder, is clearly not that of a frail, elderly woman. It is unmistakably the figure of a tall, broadshouldered man, in drag. If Hitchcock had really wanted us to believe that the killer was Norman's mother, he could easily have set up or edited his shots to conceal the physique of the murderer. (And he could have done so without making it obvious that he was hiding something, which is the effect of the crane shot on the stairs.) That he allows us to see Norman exactly as he would have appeared to Marion suggests not only that Hitchcock is (typically) playing fair, but that he wants the audience to know the truth - if only sub-consciously, or as part of a confused memory. If the killer had really looked like a woman the film might have been more mystifying but it would not have been as disturbing, or, in the end, as complex and satisfying. The thought that, yes, we knew or should have known the truth all along intensifies our own sense of complicity. It is an example of Hitchcock's sacrificing suspense or mystery in his later films in favour of psychological and moral ambiguity, as with the revelation of the murder plot of Vertigo before Scottie himself discovers the truth.

Norman's identity as the killer is never really hidden. The truth may simply be that we are unwilling, or too frightened, to accept it.

(Editor's note. This astute observation on Psycho sent me back to the Truffaut interview book. Discussing the scene, mentioned in Evan's letter, where Norman carries his mother downstairs, Hitchcock says that he had Norman conduct an argument with his mother in order to distract the viewer from the camera's movement - which was itself a deliberate distraction! Otherwise, we'd have been asking what was going on and why we weren't seeing 'Mother' up close.

Now, about the shower scene. I think Evan is basically right. Hitchcock shot views of Mother in such a way that they were 'in character' for either a man or a woman. Similarly, he'd already given her a voice that was at once that of a dotty old lady and a hammy male actor. By the time the shower scene arrives, we've been carefully worked over to accept that Mother is "ill" though still "strong", and that she "just goes a little mad sometimes". When we do finally glimpse her larger-than-life figure, it seems to accord with what we think we already know about her. Besides, at this point we're supposed to be reeling with shock, not speculating too much about appearances!

In sum, it's true that "Norman's identity as the killer is never really hidden". Equally, though, his real identity isn't emphasised either, until the dénouement in the cellar. Further comments, anyone?)

* * *

Adrian Martin, Brighton, Victoria, Australia.

I'm overjoyed that you have the stamina, time and obsessiveness to put out your own publication. I have always been a believer in, and supporter of, the 'small magazine'. The true blood of film culture flows through such publications. For a serious film lover, they form the 'secret history of the twentieth century' of which Greil Marcus speaks so passionately in his book 'Lipstick Traces'.

Here's some random Hitchcockian notes and queries I would like to share with your readers:

1. A Lost Hitchcock Conference? In 'Framework' 13, 1980, there is reference to a Hitchcock Conference held in Rome, May 1980. Some of the fascinating-sounding presentations included "Hitchcock the Dandy" by Thomas Elsaesser, "Hypnogogic Structures in Hitchcock" by Charles Barr, and "Griffith and Hitchcock" by Pascal Bonitzer. Does anyone know if the proceedings of this conference were ever published? And if not, what about a few free copies of 'The MacGuffin' sent to Elsaesser and Barr at the University of East Anglia, with a request for a printing of their manuscripts? What a publishing coup that would be!

2. French Articles on Hitch I Would Most Like to See Translated. I have collected a hefty file of French discussions/studies of Hitchcock down the years, particularly from the major magazines 'Cahiers du Cinema', 'Positif' and 'Cinema'. Many would be great to see translated ... any takers? Here are some of the highlights, several from the explosion of Hitchcockiana that happened in 1984 with the famous re-release of the "lost" and classic films.

a. "Interview With Jean Douchet", 'Cinema' 305, May 1984. Douchet is one of the greatest French critics. He wrote a classic book on Hitchcock in 1967 (Editions de l'Herne). Only a fragment of his 1959 discussion on Psycho has ever been translated (that's in the 'Hitchcock Reader'). Later, in 1980, he contributed an in-depth study of Family Plot to Raymond Bellour's anthology 'The American Cinema'. For the past several years - now a 'grand old man' of the French critical world - he has written a remarkable 'Chronicle' column in 'Cahiers du Cinema', including important reflections on everything from Godard, Demy and Rossellini to the Australian film Ghosts of the Civil Dead. On the occasion of the Hitch re-releases, 'Cinema' magazine interviewed Douchet at length about the state of his thinking about the director, and how he would evaluate his own 1967 book, with its system of the 'three orders' underlying Hitch's oeuvre - the occult/metaphysical or esoteric order; the logical or aesthetic order; and the everyday or psychological order. The particular focus of the discussion is Vertigo.

b. "Desire By the Rope, or: The Pleasures of Hell, The Hell of Pleasure (notes on the fetishism of the long take in Rope)" by Jean-Pierre Coursodon, 'Cinema' 314, November 1985. This piece, by the co-editor of the fine 2-volume 'American Directors' series, is, in my reading, the most brilliant and penetrating discussion of Rope around.

c. "Figure of Destiny" by Michel Chion, 'Cahiers du Cinema' 358, April 1984. Chion is an acclaimed experimental composer and the author of a 3-volume work on sound in cinema. This article is an analysis of the use of music in The Lady Vanishes. Note also that, in his 3-volume series, Chion devotes sections of Vols 1 and 2 to Psycho, and an important chapter of Vol.3 to Rear Window.

d. "A Little Diptych for 'Sir Alfred'" by Gerard Legrand, 'Positif' 234, September 1980. Legrand is another of the 'grand old men' of the French critical scene, surrealist, philosopher and author of the classic 'Cinemania'. He published this fascinating article - a rewritten version of his contribution to the above-cited Rome conference - on the occasion of Hitch's death.

e. There's also a French film magazine called 'Vertigo'. I have issue 5 (1990) on food and eating in the cinema. It's not a magazine devoted solely to Hitch, but this issue has Raymond Bellour comparing dining

scenes in Shadow of a Doubt and Sternberg's Scarlet Empress; plus a long and fascinating piece by Claude Beylie on the significance of food in Hitchcock's oeuvre. On re-checking the latter, I discover that it, too, hails from the 1980 Rome conference!

3. Other Reading Notes. I should mention an article on Notorious by John Beebe, a Jungian analyst, in 'Journal of Popular Film & TV', Vol.18 No.1, Spring 1990. It was presented, in a very compressed way, in a recent series on Jung on TV, "Wisdom of the Dream". Finally, a note to Australian readers (at least) that a long article "Rope: The Hitchcock Room" by John McConchie recently appeared in the art magazine 'Broadsheet', June 1991, published in Adelaide.

That's the end of this communique! I'm looking forward to the next 'MacGuffin'.

(Editor's note. Thanks hugely, Adrian. I've been teaching myself French for a while now in order to read exactly the sort of articles and books on Hitch you've listed. Future 'MacGuffins' should reflect some of this reading. Now, about the 1980 Rome Conference on Hitchcock. I once heard that papers from it were going to be published, presumably only in Italian, by Savelli of Rome. So in 1987 I wrote to them at an illustrious-sounding address - "via Visconti 20, 1/00193 Roma" - only to have my letter returned marked "Trasferito ... Irreperibile". The bird had flown. I guess my next move will be to follow your suggestion and write to Messrs Elsaesser and Barr in England.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Australian films honoured in France

Film festivals in France have recently featured several movies from Down Under. At Douarnenez, an "Australian Aboriginal Retrospective" screened 29 documentaries and feature films, including Charles Chauvel's Jedda (1955), Peter Weir's The Last Wave (1977) and such moving recent works as Essie Coffey's My Survival as an Aboriginal.

Speaking of Peter Weir, screenings at the La Rochelle festival and in Paris highlighted his three earliest features: The Cars that Ate Paris (1971), Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975) and The Last Wave. Commenting in the September issue of 'Cahiers du Cinema', critic Laurence Giavarini suggested that the films crystallise "the age-old fears dear to the fantastic imagination: fear of the loss of bodily integrity and the unity of the self, fear of the return of dead things; also, the fascination with [new?] beginnings, and the suspicion of parallel worlds".

But it isn't only the Old Wave of Australian directors who have received French acclaim lately. At Cannes, during the prestigious Directors' Fortnight, newcomer Jocelyn Moorhouse's Proof was given a standing ovation.

* Incidentally, Moorhouse's film, with its curious premise of a blind man seeking to know the world through photographs, has scooped the pool at an Australian Film Institute presentation, including winning the prize for Best Feature Film.

Vale Sumner Locke Elliott (1917-1991)

The author of 'Careful, He Might Hear You', which was made into one of the best Australian films of the '80s, has died in New York. Among the 200 mourners at his funeral were friends Elaine Steinbeck (widow of author John Steinbeck), actress Linda Hunt (diminutive winner of an Academy Award for her performance in Peter Weir's The Year of Living Dangerously) and screenwriter Whitfield Cook (whose credits include Hitchcock's Stage Fright).

Sumner Locke Elliott was born in Sydney, Australia, but became an American citizen in 1955. Besides his many plays and novels, he wrote scripts for television. A timely paperback edition of his story 'Fairyland' has recently been published. Here's how Abbey's Bookshop (Sydney) describes it:

> The partly autobiographical story of the growth of an outsider. At a young age a boy realises that he is not only socially from the wrong side of the fence but also sexually. Nevertheless, the boy (who we have surely met in 'Careful, He Might Hear You') is keen to make the best of opportunities that present themselves, all the while longing to find the other with whom he could be fully himself ... Set initially in pre-World War II Sydney, and then in the theatre world of New York, [the story] smoothly relates ... the muted sense of emptiness of one for whom happiness is withheld, quite arbitrarily.

Two for the Hitchcock scholars

(a) The dream sequence in 'Spellbound'. Film producer James Bigwood contests Ingrid Bergman's claim that the well-known Spellbound dream sequence, designed by Salvador Dali, was meant to be fully 20 minutes long. In an elaborately-researched article, "Solving a Spellbound Puzzle", published in 'American Cinematographer', June 1991, Bigwood suggests that the sequence was meant to run just 40 or 50 seconds beyond its present 2 minutes and 49 seconds.

Bigwood even quotes from a script of the missing portion, known as The Ballroom Sequence, and provides a sketch showing that the actors were rehearsed and costumes made. The script describes 'J.B.' (Gregory Peck) dancing with Constance (Bergman), and an orchestra "dressed in white fur hats" being led by Dr Brulov (Michael Chekov).

As for the business, enthused about by Bergman, of a cracked statue crawling with ants, Bigwood says categorically that "Hitchcock quickly put a stop to that idea".

(b) Hitchcock's vanished 'Mary' shown on East German television. Hitchcock told Truffaut that he shot two versions of his film Murder! (1930): an English version and a German version. But until recently only the former has been available for viewing. Now the German-language version has not only surfaced on television, under its title Mary, but the Germans have made available a print to Britain's National Film Archive for research purposes.

In 'Sight & Sound', Autumn 1990, Richard Combs describes in detail the differences between the two versions. The German version runs some 12 minutes shorter and, ironically, is missing some of the 'German Expressionist' touches of the English version. Gone, for instance, is the comic business with the thick carpet in Sir John's office into which a character's feet literally sink. Also missing is the sexual ambivalence of Handel Fane (Esme Percy) in Murder!, "both in terms of performance and the doubly contemptuous epithet, 'half-breed', which is used to refer to his homosexuality".

Combs concludes that Mary, devoid of the "messy" elements of Murder!, is merely "a neat little potboiler, efficient but rather empty".

"Outing the Dead"

The phrase is novelist Fay Wheldon's, and it's had quite an airing lately. For instance, the late Daphne du Maurier (author of 'Rebecca' and 'The Birds') has been "outed" as lesbian, and the estate of Noel Coward (whose 'Easy Virtue' Hitchcock filmed) is reportedly trying to stop publication of a biography which shows that the playwright's private life had a particularly nasty side.

Even more spectacular is the disclosure made by Donald Spoto's forthcoming 'Laurence Olivier: a Biography'. Spoto, who was less than kind, certainly less than objective, towards Hitchcock in his controversial 1983 biography of the director, alleges that Olivier had a 10-year love affair with the comedian and actor Danny Kaye.

Although both parties were married at the time - Olivier to actress Vivien Leigh - Spoto claims that Kaye managed his schedule to enable him to see Olivier in Los Angeles and London, and by 1950 had insinuated himself into Olivier's life.

* Press reports on the new Spoto book don't mention what has happened to his biography of Marlene Dietrich, announced two years ago. Has it been shelved?

Soon for TV

On a lighter note, British television is to make a four-part mini-series based on Somerset Maugham's Ashenden Stories. Hitchcock buffs will know of the character Ashenden and his espionage exploits in World War I from seeing the 1936 film The Secret Agent, itself based on at least two of Maugham's stories, 'The Hairless Mexican' and 'The Traitor'. Ashenden himself (played in Hitchcock's film by a young John Gielgud) is a flattering self-portrait of Maugham.

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Dramatic Film Music in Hollywood's Golden Years (Part 1)

When the talkies came to Hollywood in the late '20s, music ensembles in the stage pit went into rapid decline. The sheer fascination of hearing conversation on film was sufficient to captivate audiences for at least four years after the synchronous sound recording was introduced. So before about 1934 music for the dramatic film was frequently limited to a splash or two of Liszt or Tchaikovsky under the opening credits, with 'Swan Lake' and the love theme from the 'Romeo and Juliet' tone poem doing stout service for many a boy-girl clinch at the fade-out.

Meanwhile, the expulsion of large numbers of liberal-minded artists from Nazi Germany after 1933 coincided with Hollywood's growing need for musicians, and few composers were more welcome than the Austrian-Jewish emigrés Erich Wolfgang Korngold and Max Steiner (though the latter had actually been in America since 1924). Between them they established a new grammar of music for the romantic-tragic-epic movie and their influence still lingers in the work of living writers of film scores from John Williams to Maurice Jarre.

Korngold and Steiner did their best work at Warner Brothers where they enjoyed the services of the superb composer-orchestrator Hugo Friedhofer. Warners was the first studio to employ a full symphony orchestra for high-prestige soundtracks, replacing the erratic dronings of the tiny chamber ensemble which was all the early '30s studio could usually afford. 1935 proved to be a watershed year since Korngold, after composing an almost complete symphonic score for Captain Blood, quickly followed it with the longest full score written up to that time, that for Anthony Adverse (1936). Part of Warners' secret lay in their superior recording placements and their use of a big, resonant sound stage to give depth to the music.

When Darryl Zanuck became production head of the Fox-Twentieth Century merger in 1935, he gave orders that an increasing budget be devoted to the music department. By 1940 the Fox orchestra and sound recording under the direction of Alfred Newman were well abreast in quality with those of Warners. Curiously enough, the mighty MGM and the long-established Paramount remained relatively indifferent to high quality symphonic music. It was reputed that both Louis Mayer and his wunderkind Irving Thalberg had a tin ear for classical music. As a result, dramatic scores from Herbert Stothart, long-time MGM music director, tended to be mere sentimental re-workings of traditional melodies recorded fuzzily in a studio without real ambience. Here the brass belched rather than hymned, tympani clattered like fruit cases, and the higher strings were frequently played vulgarly with mutes. Their sound was usually poured on like molten fudge. If Metro needed a special score it was likely to hire a Franz Waxman (for Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 1941) or a Bronislau Kaper (for Green Dolphin Street, 1946).

Erich Korngold did not score very many films but all were done for Warners. All reflected the ripe vein of Richard Strauss-ian late romanticism which had shone through Korngold's youthful but gorgeously scored 1920 opera, 'The Dead City'. A child prodigy whose gift for orchestral composition astonished Strauss, Mahler and Puccini in turn, Korngold flowered rather too early and seemed to have lost a large part of his creative

spark by about 1950. His Violin Concerto merely borrowed the key theme from his score for The Prince and the Pauper (1937). Korngold's only post-Hollywood work of real distinction was his sinewy Symphony in F Sharp (1950).

Korngold scored films as he would an opera libretto. No other composer tried and succeeded so well to translate the emotive counterpoint between stage/screen action and theme music which Wagner had pioneered at Bayreuth. The music for The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938) is Korngold's best remembered score, and indeed sumptuous string writing for the combined theme of Robin and Maid Marion puts it among the loveliest ever penned for a love scene. But most aficionados agree that King's Row (1942) produced the finest of all Korngold's music for film. An arresting declamatory fanfare under the credits begins in the difficult key of B flat major and its richness contains enough material to develop a full symphonic movement. King's Row has many marvellous touches, with broodings in the lower strings doubled occasionally by piano to represent the darker secrets of the small New England town. For the grandmother Madame Von Eln there is a theme of yearning nostalgic nobility scored for strings and horns. The transformation of the main theme provides a concluding paean of triumph for the young doctor hero Parris Mitchell, and is one of the most stirring finales to any film.[1]

Max Steiner grew up in much the same Viennese tradition as Korngold. His more than 300 film scores, or parts of scores, represents an output never likely to be equalled. Like Korngold he preferred plangent, almost over-ripe, romantic writing, but he could use a jazz idiom when needed. Steiner's gift for coining so many memorable themes remains a legend. Contrary to popular imagining, the writing for Gone With the Wind is not his best. The Tara theme, of course, is justly famous, but hearing of the full score shows much highly derivative material padded out with fragments of the war songs, ballads and bugle calls of the Civil War period. The score shows many signs of Steiner's enforced haste in its preparation. Its tonal textures are often too thick, the woodwind writing is often anaemic, while the strings and brass tend to be too intrusive at moments of dramatic tension. However, Steiner's pioneering score for RKO's King Kong (1933) deserves its esteem as perhaps the finest really sophisticated symphonic score ever done in Hollywood. Also, buffs will find his music for such vehicles as The Adventures of Don Juan (1949), The Big Sleep (1946), All This and Heaven Too (1940) and Key Largo (1948) rather more brilliant and rewarding than that for the celebrated Selznick epic of 1939.[2]

A third composer in the earliest group of distinguished cinema musicians was Franz Waxman who hailed from Germany and forsook the lushness of Steiner and Korngold for more contrapuntal, occasionally dissonant, writing in the technical tradition of Brahms and Reger. His most celebrated early score was a highly original and dissonant backing for The Bride of Frankenstein (1935) with the celebrated 'Bride' theme intoned by the ondes martenot as the first true electronic solo instrument ever used in serious film music. Universal Studios later worked the score to death, using snatches of it in all their Flash Gordon serials.

Perhaps Waxman's best remembered film music is his darkly glowing writing for Hitchcock's Rebecca (1940). An emphasis on heavily doubled strings in the lower register firmly backed by horns is typical of his classical style. So, too, is his use of motifs, drawn in this case from nature - water and fire. Waxman could also write lighter music for Hitchcock, as for the master's famous Rear Window (1954), though neither director nor composer were happy with the result.[3] Another Hitchcock opus, The Paradine Case (1948), was better suited to the foreboding Waxman style, and its music is fondly remembered as helping to augment the tension in what was even then a rather time-worn story.[4]

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(Part 2 of this article will discuss the work of Dimitri Tiomkin, Alfred Newman, Miklos Rozsa and Bernard Herrmann.)

Notes

1. Fortunately the RCA vinyl record series of Korngold film score excerpts has now been completely transferred to CD. A full Varese-Saraband CD of the music for King's Row has been available for some time.

2. Liberal excerpts from all these scores are on RCA CDs.

3. Not that it mattered too much. The film's soundtrack, incorporating both music and non-music 'effects', is itself of near-symphonic richness. A suite of the better musical segments from Rear Window has just been issued with other Hitchcock music on CD (Pro Arte, CDS 524).

4. A CD devoted to Waxman's best music is available on RCA CD, and includes his sombre modern idiomatic American score for Sunset Boulevard (1950). Other compilations are around, but less well done.

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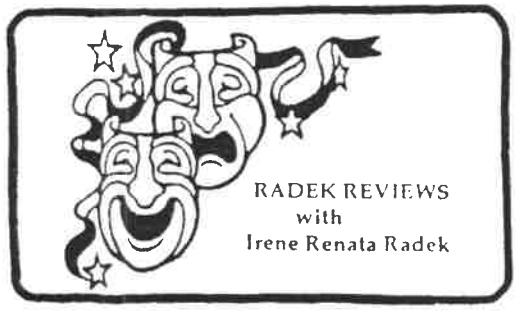

DEAD AGAIN (d. Kenneth Branagh). (Warning. The following is a film analysis as well as a review so, unless you want most of the movie's plot divulged to you, see the film first!)

Dead Again is to Hitchcock what instant pudding is to mousse. The film's ingredients are basically the same as in Hitchcock (murder mystery with dashes of the supernatural and film noir) but they're put together in such a careless way that little remains after ingestion except a vaguely unpleasant taste.

The story of composer Roman and pianist Margaret Strauss (Kenneth Branagh, Henry V and real-life wife Emma Thompson, ditto) is told during the film's opening sequence by the use of newspaper clippings written by '40s journalist Gray Baker (Andy Garcia, The Godfather, Part 3). Roman has been executed for murdering his wife though he proclaims his innocence to the very end.

With the aid of a dream sequence, we are transported into the present-day lives of American "finder of heirs" detective Mike Church (also Branagh) and Jane Doe amnesiac "Grace" (also Thompson). At the request of a friend - and because he's taken a fancy to her - Mike takes Grace into his care, placing an ad in the paper requesting information on his initially mute boarder. Grace has lost voice and memory due to some unknown trauma she has recently suffered.

Before you can say 'predictable', a hypnotist/antique dealer named Franklyn (Derek Jacobi, Henry V - virtually a cinematic stock company here ...) appears and offers to help Grace regain her voice and identity by delving into her past life - as Roman Strauss. Mike is also regressed after Grace determines that he was in her past, only to discover that he was the distaff Strauss. Since Franklyn encourages Grace to merely witness her past life during regression therapy rather than actively participate in it, the gender-bender twist is revealed late in the film.

So we have a full-colour present intercut with sepia-toned black and white flashbacks to 1948, mostly narrated by a hypnotised Grace. Two plot-propelling items (aka "MacGuffins"), an anklet and scissors ad nauseam, help link past to present along with the word-symbol (aka "Rosebud") "disher", which is later revealed to be "Die Scherer" ("the cutter") - German words engraved on the scissors used to kill Margaret.

Director/star Kenneth Branagh's German accent is reminiscent of campy Colonel Klink in TV's Hogan's Heroes but the Brit does deliver an amazingly accurate American way of speaking. However, Branagh's constant gesticulating together with his grimacing, eyeball-rolling and other exaggerated facial contortions are entirely too broad. His chronic overACTing and dialogue-PUSHing keep the audience emotionally distanced. Stage-vet Branagh seems to forget that for cinema he need not play to the back row.

As Grace/Margaret, Emma Thompson is also somewhat "stagey-big" but not quite as noticeably as her hammy hubby. Thompson shows fear well with her very expressive doe-eyes but, even so, her permanent deer-caught-in-the-headlights look loses its effect before long. In a nutshell, Mike and Grace come across as little more than the cinematic equivalent of that loathsome twosome from the Taster's Choice TV ads.

Conversely, Andy Garcia is casual, suave and sexy as bon vivant/yellow journalist Gray Baker. Though his character is a '40s film noir stereotype, Garcia's performance is ultimately more believable than either

Branagh's or Thompson's. Garcia, as he is wont to do, steals the show whenever he appears and, even as a scruffy, smirking drunk, is considerably more likable and attractive than the cold tight-assed Roman. Furthermore, Garcia deftly delivers a blow of very black humour as a crotchety old man with a repulsive need for cigarettes. And kudos to Dead Again's makeup person for the incredible age effects.

As Franklyn Madson, Derek Jacobi is appropriately comedic in his bumbling and greed, yet surprisingly sinister at the core. Both personalities coexist believably within Franklyn thanks to Jacobi's precise performance.

Various other actors of considerable stature appear in Dead Again. Of particular note is an unbilled Robin Williams (The Fisher King) as foulmouthed ex-psychiatrist, now grocery store owner, Cozy Carlisle. This seedy, bizarre shopkeeper contributes most of Dead Again's comic relief with his brash pronunciations on "the karmic credit plan".

Hannah Schygulla (The Marriage of Maria Braun) gives a quietly effective performance as Roman's lovestruck German housekeeper Inga. And Gregor Hesse as Frankie, Inga's stuttering son, evokes sympathy with his soft innocence and haunted, sad eyes which make his eventual behaviour all the more shocking - even a little hard to swallow.

More comedic realism is contributed by Wayne Knight as Mike's sidekick Pete who whistles while he talks. I'm not sure if this annoying whistle is intentional ... if it is, why? If not, it should've been erased. Also, Pete's tale of personal trauma is a pinprick against Dead Again's plot holes but bothersome nonetheless. Pete tells of a man he encountered who had gone on a bloody rampage with hedge clippers which only ended after he'd cut off both his own arms. Yes, both of them! Maybe he was a contortionist.

Other Dead Again cameos feature Christine Ebersole (Mac & Me) as Lydia Larson, a Hedda Hopper-like society columnist who consorts with Baker, and Campbell Scott (Dying Young) as Doug O'Malley, Grace's fake fiancé.

It's quite a coup for Branagh to have gathered so many renowned performers for his first Hollywood film. I imagine these actors particularly wanted to work with this classical British auteur, somehow believing the collaboration would add to their own credibility. And, conversely, for Branagh, the Hollywood group must have appealed because they'd help draw audiences to a film starring little known actors. Yet I can't help feeling that small parts like Scott's and Ebersole's could've been executed just as expertly by newcomers who could use the career break.

What stands out most about Dead Again is scissors, scissors, scissors!!! Scissors on the table and in paintings, scissors cutting hair and snipping bacon ... The camera repeatedly zooms in on scissors while ominous music builds in a melodramatic minor key. After a while Dead Again's ceaseless scissor symbolism brings to mind a Saturday Night Live parody skit and I just want to laugh. Not good. Even Grace's real name turns out to be "Amanda Sharp". Again, ha ha.

Dead Again also features murder mystery essentials like numerous thunderstorms (somewhat out of character for sunny Los Angeles), a creepy mansion and a soundtrack to wake the dead. This obtrusive music not only telegraphs but also destroys what little suspense exists. The more effective use of deliciously ominous silence is a rare commodity in this film.

However, the worst bit of telegraphing occurs visually in a potentially edge-of-the-seat scene when Frankie kills his mother. After he's put Inga to bed we can still see Frankie's shadow in motion so we know that, a) Frankie hasn't left, and b) since Inga is lying face up/eyes shut, Frankie's probably picking up a pillow with which to smother her. Which he does. Surprise, surprise.

And the ending is far too busy, ambitious and confusing, with too many, er, cutaways, too many characters and too much mind-blowing music for any of the action to be the least bit frightening - or even interesting.

Now a few questions for writer Scott Frank and director Branagh:

* Why is Mike totally oblivious to his past when HE (Margaret) was the one murdered - especially as he slips

into his past life as easily as Grace when under hypnosis? And why is Grace afraid of scissors and protective of her throat when Margaret (Mike) was the one stabbed? Shouldn't Grace be afraid of chairs instead since she (Roman) was zapped in an electric one?

* As for Franklyn, why does he try so hard to bring out Grace's past, thereby implicating himself? When Franklyn first got wind of Grace's existence, why didn't he just pack up and hightail it out of town? Surely no legal system would pursue Franklyn based on a few nonspecific flashbacks to an amnesiac's past life!

* Especially since he's a private detective, wouldn't Mike be a TEENSY bit suspicious when Franklyn just HAPPENS to have a magazine at hand that features an article from 40-plus years ago about the VERY cast of characters that Grace conjures up in her first regression session?

* And when the three of them are examining said magazine featuring photos of Roman and Margaret, DOES NO ONE NOTICE THAT MIKE IS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF ROMAN? Everyone remarks on Grace's resemblance to Margaret but only later does Cozy make a glancing reference to the Roman/Mike similitude. Dead Again would've been much more suspenseful and 'believable' if the two couples had been played by four different actors (as was originally intended). But, instead, Kenneth "I can do EVERYTHING!" Branagh bit off more than he or wife Thompson could chew and Dead Again suffers as a result.

* Why does no one notice that the old Strauss mansion/scene of the murder and the St Audrey's Catholic Home for Boys (where Mike grew up and to which Grace runs in her amnesiac hysteria) are one and the same? It's pointed out to the audience via a tell-tale close-up of a treble clef on the mansion's gate, but no-one in the film ever brings it up.

* If you could hypnotise someone by simply gazing into their eyes for a few seconds and stroking their hand, wouldn't you be out controlling the world? Or at least appearing on a few talk shows? Franklyn hypnotises Grace just a bit too easily/quickly for my liking - especially since she's just met him! A trusting gal, that Gracie!

* And, finally, why does Grace lock her door to keep Mike from entering only AFTER he arrives? If Grace were THAT scared, wouldn't she lock all her doors and draw all her blinds the minute she got home? Or, here's a wild thought - why not just spend the night in a hotel ...?

Dead Again is a harmless attempt at incorporating a 1940s Hitchcockian murder mystery into the present. Unfortunately, the plot is too full of holes and the performances too full of ham to be effective. Dead Again should be renamed "Try Again".

Copyright 24 October, 1991, by Irene Renata Radek

['Radek Reviews' welcomes correspondence. Write to either 'The MacGuffin' (address on back page) or direct to Irene Renata Radek, 3 Louisa Drive, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1E 4T4.]

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Real-life crimes and Hitchcock's films: The Wrong Man; Hollywood composers, part II; book reviews (e.g. 'The World Viewed', 'Cary Grant: The Lonely Heart'); the production process illuminated; alternative cinema. Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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BOOK REVIEW

Wood, Robin: 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (Columbia University Press, 1989; hardback)

Hitchcoin an oxymoron: this is a new-old book. Most obviously, while one half of it consists of a reprint of Wood's seminal 'Hitchcock's Films' (1966) plus material added for the 1969 and 1977 editions, its other half comprises a new 50-page Introduction and several new chapters such as one called "The Murderous Gays: Hitchcock's Homophobia". I hasten to add that Wood's general tone remains one of unbending seriousness: his quarrel on the title of rival author William Rothman's 'Hitchcock - The Murderous Gaze' is positively the nearest thing to a joke you'll find in this book.

It's new-old in other ways as well. Wood acknowledges that despite his "radical change in ideological position" (a reference to his latter-day Marxism and sexual politics, and now religion), this "has had little effect on which films I value", just "a fairly drastic effect on why I value them". Clearly, what this amounts to is a case of plus ça change ... , though it's not necessarily one whose implications Wood has fully thought out.

He denies that his new-found ideology has constricted his performance as a critic:

> I believe that I now see far more in films than I used to, because I have allowed myself to become aware of depths, tensions, conflicts that lie beneath the [film's] "auteurist" surface, that enter the film through the author from the culture of which both he and his work are products (though never mere products).

You certainly hope that Wood sees "far more in films than [he] used to"; after all, he has been teaching and writing about them professionally for a quarter of a century. And during that time, film academics generally, not just Wood, have been busily learning to de-construct texts, i.e. films, in ways that indeed surpass any simple "auteurist" approach. (Wood's contribution to this "common pursuit" has been substantial but, I'd argue, increasingly subordinate to iniatives from others.) The specific question he should have asked is whether his own active espousal of causes like feminism and gay liberation has benefited his analyses of films.

On the evidence of this book, I doubt that it has. There's one particularly staggering moment (pp. 342-3) when Wood suggests that the reason Hitchcock in the 1920s (a) suddenly began putting on weight and (b) decided to get married was that he wanted to protect himself against feeling attracted to gay actor Ivor Novello (whom Hitchcock directed in just two pictures, during 1925-27). Though I'd have thought that it would be sufficient to account for (a) to say that Hitchcock was now beginning to feel a measure of happiness and security in his life, and for (b) to say that he and Alma Hitchcock (née Reville) loved each other, still, with hindsight, Wood's further point that Hitchcock may have had "a hysterical resistance to being physically attractive to anyone" does seem plausible. Yet the speculative element is typical of the book's tendency: the films risk being smothered in surmise.

In a chapter on Blackmail (1929), which is rather less revelatory than Wood may have intended, he breaks off at one point to tell us about his parents (both were antique dealers) and how with his "typical British middle-class upbringing" he "never heard the word 'sex' spoken within my family, either by my parents or by any of my four older brothers and sisters". Soon he breaks off again, i.e. to give an aside to an aside, this time about the state of education, both pre-World War II and today ("though the taboos now are more likely to be political than sexual"). None of what he says is altogether irrelevant or wrong, but nor is it especially illuminating of the films; and far more perspective on sexual matters can be had by turning to, say, the first chapter of Steven Marcus's 'The Other Victorians' (bearing as it does on the start of this century, when Hitchcock was growing up).

However, Wood's new analysis of Rope (1948) is excellent as far as it goes, focussing on the 'gay' elements:

> Brandon and Philip may or may not be "lovers" in the technical sense. What the film conveys so impressively, and so accurately, is the intensity with which they hate each other.

Wood argues convincingly that the murder of David Kentley - the apparently 'meaningless' crime at the core of the film - reflects upon the society that forbids and punishes homosexual love. But once again the impeccably formulated observation isn't as original as Wood probably thought. In an unpublished monograph on Rope sent to me a few years ago by its author, Mensan Victor Graf, the latter argues just such a case as Wood's. That monograph became a collaborative effort by Victor and myself, and I hope to publish some of it in a future 'MacGuffin'. For now, let it suffice to say that our analysis is born out by Wood's, and at several points goes further. For instance, while Wood notes the unwitting complicity of Brandon's former teacher Rupert Cadell (James Stewart) in instigating the murder - Rupert is one of Hitchcock's deeply flawed lead-characters of the Hollywood period, beginning with Maxim de Winter in Rebecca (1940) - he doesn't pursue the matter. Claiming "the film is notably reticent on the subject of Rupert's own sexuality (he is a bachelor)", Wood ends his analysis there. Thus he neglects to recall Rupert's war-wound mentioned by the housekeeper Mrs Wilson (a wound whose significance even Woody Allen, in another context, understands) as he also neglects to recall Rupert's specific jobs: housemaster in a boys' prep school, minor publisher of other people's writings. It's clear, I think, that the film makes Rupert's impotence a symbol of his victimisation by - and a certain divisiveness in - society; there are matched signs of impotence in Brandon and Philip themselves (consider Brandon's struggle to open a champagne bottle, which Wood notes, and Philip's trauma concerning chickens).

My point is that Wood's rather curtailed analyses of Blackmail (imitation Raymond Bellour much of the time) and Rope (where pretty nearly only the film's 'gayness' is remarked) typify the new sections of his book: they're often predictable and they leave you up in the air. Another instance is provided by Wood's passing comments on that very rich film, Rebecca. He starts by noting how

> it is Hitchcock's first Hollywood film that establishes definitively two of the major bases of his later work: the identification with the woman's position, and the preoccupation with male sexual anxiety in the face of an actual or potential autonomous female sexuality: the central structuring tension of many of his greatest films.

Fair enough - but misleading. Maxim's position is not exactly overlooked by the film (though you'd hardly know that, to judge from recent feminist criticism, including Wood's). Like the Hon. Michael Fitzhubert in the Australian film, Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975), aristocratic Maxim is an idealist: he'll be half in love with his first vision of Rebecca, whom the novel describes as being like a boy in a sailing suit and having a face "like a Botticelli angel", for the rest of his life. (Consider his response in the film when Joan Fontaine refers to her late father's painting the same tree over and over again: "I'm a firm believer in that myself".) Also, to quibble, I'm not certain how a film may identify "with the woman's position" yet simultaneously be preoccupied "with male sexual anxiety".

Here, too, Wood should have analysed further. After Maxim loses Rebecca, in what is tantamount to murder, a pall descends on the film: once or twice it's almost visible. A general sterility prevails, represented by such figures as the seemingly lesbian housekeeper Mrs Danvers and the "harmless" old seaman known as 'Barmy' Ben. In all of this there are parallells with Rope, Vertigo (1958) and, again, Picnic at Hanging Rock. Now, Wood does indeed notice that the film fails to attain an unambiguous 'happy ending':

> The heroine's opening and closing voice-over narrative nowhere suggests present happiness (though Manderley is burned, Mrs Danvers dead, and Rebecca's ghost officially laid to rest): indeed, it fails even to establish that the couple are still together.

Actually, a glance at the novel (which producer David Selznick insisted be followed to the letter) shows that the couple do stay together. But they remain childless and, as the film's narration does tell us, they "can never go back to Manderley". Instead, they spend their days trailing from one obscure Mediterranean hotel to another: a far cry from Maxim's boyhood on his beloved Cornish coast, now forever associated in his mind (and ours) with the pernicious Rebecca. Appropriately, Daphne du Maurier's desolate prose in these passages approaches that of the great pessimistic philosopher Schopenhauer.

If only Wood had been able to sublimate his 'political purpose' when writing the new sections of his book, they would surely have cohered more. He would also have grappled more directly, as his mentor, the literary critic F.R. Leavis, was able to do, with what Wood himself calls "human nature". That, after all, is the

real Schopenhauerian bedrock of Hitchcock's films. (And, I dare say, it provides the explanation of Wood's own unchanging regard for certain films over others.) Ironically, he insists on the concept:

> **We must repudiate above all the notion that "human nature" is a construction of bourgeois ideology. Certainly, bourgeois ideology has attempted to impose its view of human nature as the only one, naturalizing itself and its institutions, passing them off as "real," hence unchangeable: this is one of Marxism's great, radical, seminal perceptions. But to leap from this to a belief that "therefore" there is no such thing as human nature is a most extraordinary and dangerous non sequitur.**

Quite so. Because Wood takes his stand on this, because he continues to often perceive trenchantly both films and life, and because he strongly criticises the shortcomings of other critical positions (though not always unambiguously: e.g. re Bellour), he remains a force to reckon with. Many of us can tolerate his evident narcissism and his solecisms, for we see both what he is up against and (vide his endorsing in this book of Janaček's "religious" music) his possible future individuation at a still higher level.

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Contributors to this issue

Adrian Martin is a Melbourne critic and broadcaster whose work is highly regarded in several fields, but notably film. His projected book on 'teen movies' has yet to find a publisher, which is a pity. Adrian has promised to contribute further articles to 'The MacGuffin' when he can.

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Irene Renata Radek is a Canadian actress and entertainment journalist. A graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles, she has appeared on stage, film, television and radio - and has even been a stand-up comedienne! One of Irene's remaining ambitions is to appear in films overseas.

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Review: 'He Said, She Said'

(Modelled after the Tracy-Hepburn comedy romances of the '40s and '50s, this intriguing new film was released in Australia straight to video. Adrian Martin hurried to watch it.)

I was eagerly looking forward to the release of this film in Australia after seeing the advance promos for it from America. It has an interesting conceptual premise: the story of a modern relationship told first from the man's (Kevin Bacon's), then the woman's (Elizabeth Perkins') point of view - with the two parts directed by a real-life directing couple, Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver. The really interesting filmmaker of that pair is Silver; I have particularly admired her teen movies Old Enough and Permanent Record. Her most recent film before this was Vital Signs, a rather formulaic entry in the 'young medical student' cycle that also includes the flamboyant Flatliners and the interesting A Cut Above.

Like Vital Signs, He Said, She Said eventually surfaced here on video; and also like Vital Signs, it has a strangely alienated sheen about it. The principal 'intertext' of the film is the array of popular lifestyle magazines (like 'Cleo') that, at present, talk out endlessly the differences between male and female psychology - not in order to change men and women or even necessarily bring them to a mutual understanding of their differences, but in a sense, to generate some compensatory frisson out of the total abyss between the sexes, the complete cultural 'alienness' of each sex faced with its opposite number.

In contemporary mainstream cinema terms, this puts He Said, She Said clearly in the train of When Harry Met Sally - a hugely successful film taking off from the old-but-newly-fashionable assumption that, in relationships, men want casual sex whilst women want romantic commitment. When Harry Met Sally is a 'neo romantic comedy' (like Green Card), but one needs to see clearly the difference between these new romances and a film like Adam's Rib. Cukor's film, too, was a celebration of the differences between men and women; but in the 'classic' romantic comedies there was always the possibility of a dynamic interchange of traits designated 'male' and 'female', a generative reciprocity between men and women. He Said, She Said is simply content to play out the amusing 'stand off' of the sexes. Indeed, even its genuinely poignant moments - the way the lovers separately agree, unbeknownst to each other, to drop their own beliefs and accept those of their partner, and the scene of Bacon confessing his true feelings of love to Perkins while she is asleep, with the later revelation that she was indeed awake but didn't let on - hold to this contemporary 'wisdom'.

The film's structure - 45 minutes of his version, then 45 minutes of hers, with a framing device that rather mechanically brings the couple together at the end - doesn't really take advantage of the possibilities of the contradictory points-of-view concept. It's very unlike the scene, say, in Annie Hall, where Allen uses a jazzy split-screen to immediately compare-and-contrast a man and a woman's attitude to the relationship they share; here, you have to wait an hour for some of the best 'pay-offs' and reversals. And a serious thematic problem of the structure is that getting so much 'he said' at the start tends to make us accept his version as some kind of baseline reality or truth, against which her version can be checked for its exaggerations, lies and distortions - although this is not strictly what the film says, or means to say.

There are a number of interesting elements in the film, considering it further in terms of its contemporary genre, or intertext. On one level, the film is part of a largely unheralded post-thirtysomething movement in contemporary cinema: relationship-centred films (including the remarkable and grossly underrated Immediate Family) that focus on the everyday lives and loves of ordinary yuppies. This is a genre that, like any other, deserves careful attention rather than kneejerk derision, since it is where a certain very honourable tradition of 'quiet', sometimes subtly disturbing drama has reappeared today - with the same attention a dramatist like Chayevsky once paid to the minutiae of mortgage payments or suburban apartment block living now trained on the consumer paraphernalia, cultural tastes and 'personal spaces' of the professional middle-class.

Since He Said, She Said is also a film about a couple who play out their relationship in the eye of the media - first in print, then on TV - it also picks up on other neo-romantic comedies like, especially, the fascinating Broadcast News, and the last Front Page remake, Switching Channels. What we are seeing in this cycle is an intense contemporary take on the His Girl Friday idea of romantic fun - living and loving and working together, breaking the big story whilst on honeymoon. Yet in He Said, She Said, another reduction of the 'classic' romantic comedy equation takes place: rather disconcertingly, the film cheerily upholds the neo-entertainment idea that, on TV, all that matters is the charming and dynamic interplay of personalities, not issues, ideas or opinions. The TV series Murphy Brown leaves itself at least a little room to be cynical about such a state of affairs, as Broadcast News is both cynical and saddened - while neither have anything to propose in its place; He Said, She Said simply smiles and acquiesces - that's the way it is, let's enjoy it. This is of course what clinches the film as a 'light comedy' - or, more exactly, taking Raymond Durgnat's suggestion, a 'comedy of manners', a genre almost always committed to 'the way things are'.

Kevin Bacon's character is the most interesting of the two (something that further unbalances the film in his favour). He has a 'complex' that I haven't seen before in a light comedy: basically, a death-wish, expressed in a worship of icons like the Wolf Man and Dracula, and in his recurring early morning terror-fits. As in recent John Hughes productions like Only the Lonely, the distant neighbour 'heavy' genre of horror is fleetingly evoked (windows slamming shut on the 'entrapped' Bacon) to embody the fierce double-bind of the character's deep longing for, yet defensive reaction to, commitment.

The film gives short shrift to at least two things (strategies of evasion and sleight-of-hand in recent films like this and Once Around deserve extended consideration). First, Perkins' intellectualism - which is never granted the status of a complex or fascinating trait, like Bacon's death-wish. She's dismissively tagged by the film as a 'liberal' - which means that she reads, has leftish political opinions and befriends artists. Only in the wonderful (and too-brief) scene of her family at dinner - a spirited, opinionated

bunch of liberal thinkers - does the film even attempt to give the character her rightful aura of specific social 'difference'.

The other thing elided in the course of the film is sex - specifically, the 'great sex' that 'Cleo'-style magazines used to promise came with great romance plus a great career. The only great sex mentioned in the film is the sex Bacon used to have with his casual girlfriends (whereas it is implied that Perkins and her artist-politico ex had lousy sex). When they get together you wait for the warm, celebratory gags about the wonderful time they're having in bed - like the way Shirley Maclaine eulogises her relation with Jack Nicholson in Terms of Endearment. But they never come. For these yuppies at least, romantic fulfilment seems to include all the joy-and-pain of getting together, breaking up, and working out a detente, but no sex. This seems like a strange alienation indeed.

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Hitchcock the Cockney: 'No. 17' (1932)

"'Ere - 'arf a mo'!" exclaimed Ben, catching hold of Fordyce's arm. "Why not 'op it, guv'nor - why not? ... "

"Well, I'll tell you why not, Ben," responded Fordyce gravely. "Hopping isn't much in my line. We've put one girl into safety, and I won't feel that we've quite finished our job until we've done the same for the other. There - now you've got it."

"Ah, but the hother's a wrong 'un," urged Ben.

"Sometimes," said Fordyce, "it's just the wrong 'uns who need the greatest help."

- J. Jefferson Farjeon, 'No. 17: A Novel, based upon the Play' (1926), pp. 259-60.

William Rothman notes what he calls a "chilling" use of the term "wrong 'un" in Hitchcock's Psycho (1960).[1] In doing so, he bends the term's customary meaning ("a dishonest character, a rogue" - 'Chambers 20th Century Dictionary) to his own purpose. For him, the term means someone "condemned from childhood to a life of isolation". In the present article, it will be convenient to accept both meanings, and to recall that Hitchcock grew up in East London, the son of a Cockney greengrocer.

The tramp, Ben, who with unconscious irony - in the novel of No. 17 - scorns "wrong 'uns", is one of the few Cockneys to figure prominently in Hitchcock's more than fifty films. Not only that, but the Cockneys who do thus figure are often crooks or murderers: think of the various criminals in Blackmail (1929), the manservant Rowley in Foreign Correspondent (1940), the greengrocer Bob Rusk in Frenzy (1972). Altogether, Ben appears to be an exception to the rule - he's a genuinely amiable, if faint-hearted, merchant sailor who has lately "lost" his ship. Moreover, the film's Ben (Leon M. Lion), like his counterpart in the novel, finds himself in a situation where he must repeatedly assert that he's not dishonest, thus defying a popular notion about Cockneys. (Even today, some etymologists link the word cockney to the French coquin, meaning precisely a rogue or "wrong 'un".) No doubt that's one reason why 'Fordyce' (John Stuart), who proves to be a famous detective on the trail of diamond thieves, at first is suspicious of him when the two encounter each other in an old house (the number 17 of the title).

In sum, one of the points of structure in both novel and film is the resurrection of Ben's self-respect. He spends half his time trying to escape (at one point, literally crawl) from the old house with its unnerving goings-on, but eventually he ends up a hero - the saviour of the famous Suffolk diamonds. True, along the way he must use some Cockney 'skills', such as pickpocketing and getting blindly drunk, yet finally he's in little danger of being called a wrong 'un. He's proved his mettle.

Now, if that's true of Ben, it's just as true of the lady-like Nora (Anne Grey). The book 'Elstree: The British Hollywood' offers this synopsis of the film: "the story of the reformation of a lady jewel thief who assists a detective to foil a gang's getaway". Is it coincidental that the lady's salavation parallells the

salvation of the jewels? Hitchcock would play with that idea again. Also, if the notion of the reformation of a lady criminal anticipates Under Capricorn (1949) and Marnie (1964), various ingredients in the 1932 film confirm the link. There's even a moment when Nora leaves her purse with Fordyce as an earnest of her loyalty - probably the first occurrence of this arresting sexual symbol in Hitchcock's films (compare Suspicion, Rear Window and Marnie).

Nora enters the story as the niece of a man (Barry Jones) who poses as a potential buyer of the old house. The fact that this pair arrive at the front door after midnight, and are immediately followed inside the house by another man, Henry (Donald Calthrop), who falsely claims he's a nephew of the first, is in keeping with the burlesque nature of the film. (In fact, all three persons are crooks using the house as an escape point for smuggling themselves and stolen booty to the Continent: a train connecting with a cross-Channel ferry runs directly under the house.) In the same vein, Nora's 'uncle' passes her off to Fordyce as being deaf and dumb when she's anything but that. Perhaps he already senses that she (his mistress?) may betray him - though Hitchcock apparently first conceived the idea as a way of sending up the invariably 'dumb' heroines of film thrillers of the time.

And again, as someone who is basically a victim of others' malfeasance, Nora anticipates Mrs Drayton of The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956). Mrs Drayton first sides with her husband when, for political reasons, he kidnaps a small American boy in Morocco, but she later becomes revulsed by the prospect that the boy may have to be killed, and frees him. Likewise, though Nora at first only hints to the other crooks about her mounting doubts, when she sees Fordyce and the innocent young girl, Miss Ackroyd (Ann Casson), shackled and left to face mortal danger from a collapsing banister rail, she alters tack; releasing both prisoners, she returns to the crooks and announces her intention of quitting. (In the meantime, Miss Ackroyd has been given back to her father's custody - hence Fordyce's comment to Ben about putting "one girl into safety" - which in turn frees the detective and Ben to go and rescue Nora in the film's exciting chase climax between a train and a bus.)

Even Fordyce's remark that "Sometimes it's just the wrong 'uns who need the greatest help" anticipates a line from The Man Who Knew Too Much (again the 1956 version). In that film, it's the ill-starred Frenchman, Louis Bernard, an undercover agent, who in the opening scene on a bus observes how "there are moments in life when we all need a little help". It does him no good - he is killed by Drayton's assassins soon afterwards - but as in the novel of No. 17 the line itself alerts the audience to the larger issues raised by the story.

* * *

I've contrived above to give an outline of No. 17 that makes of it less than a jumble. Certainly the plot of the film is hard to follow, for Hitchcock was obviously most concerned with keeping things moving. (But contra Howard Hawks's The Big Sleep, to name another film where speed and surprise are paramount, everything crucial can be worked out in hindsight.) Matters aren't helped by some low-quality sound recording and by Ben's Cockney idioms (e.g. his use of rhyming slang such as "apples and pears" for "stairs"), nor by the fact that modern prints appear to run five minutes shorter than the original (compare Jonathan Rosenbaum's review of No. 17 in the 'Retrospective' section of 'Monthly Film Bulletin', August 1975). Against all of this, one makes allowance for how Hitchcock was having himself some fun with a project imposed on him by his producers at Elstree, British International Pictures, and how the film represents his first experiments with the comedy-thriller.

A word about J. Jefferson Farjeon (aka Anthony Swift), author of the play and the novel. Rohmer and Chabrol's Hitchcock book describes Farjeon as "a prolix and popular writer who was halfway between the best and the worst, between John Buchan and Fergus Hume, between the good Edgar Wallace and the bad Edgar Wallace". That sounds about right. I've read two of Farjeon's novels and found both of them, well, readable - in a suburban lending library sort of way. Both of them ('No. 17', 'The Windmill Mystery') exploit the potential for comedy and suspense of an 'old dark house' situation. But quite soon the general effect comes to seem contrived - for instance, Farjeon may spend several pages getting two people up a single flight of stairs. Hitchcock's film keeps the best of the general zaniness but improves on it structurally, not least by adding the action finale.

The film obtained the actor who plays Ben, Leon M. Lion, from the original stage play, 'Joyous Melodrama', which was first produced in London by Lion himself (on July 6th, 1925). In his appearance (sailor's cap, scarf, cropped hair), Ben is a character in the 'lovable larrikin' mould, perhaps inspired by the Cockney son in the famous British film My Old Dutch (1915, re-made in 1934). Australian film-lovers may equally be reminded of the larrikin hero of The Sentimental Bloke (1919, re-made in 1932), though undoubtedly that is more of a classic than the other works I've just named. In any event, Lion was such a success in the part of Ben that the play ran for lengthy seasons in two theatres and promised to become "a hardy annual"; a naturally delighted J. Jefferson Farjeon wrote at least seven other works featuring his Cockney sailor (e.g. the novel 'Ben Sees It Through').

So much for background - let's now look at Hitchcock's film in detail.

* * *

Like The Trouble With Harry (1956), much of No. 17 is a film about a body. One windy night, Fordyce enters the deserted house in Amhurst Park, London, where he immediately encounters Ben who's sheltering there after seeing a 'To Let' sign outside; near the head of the first flight of stairs lies a man, apparently dead. Ben's concern to remove himself from suspicion of murder marks him as the predecessor of that other Hitchcockian 'sailor', Captain Wiles (played by Cockney actor Edmund Gwenn) in Harry. More exactly, Captain Wiles, retired, had once served on a tug-boat but had never been "more than a mile off shore". (So is Ben, too, an impostor?) Moreover, in the same way that the young artist called Sam Marlowe in Harry plays the straight-man (in every sense) to Wiles, so Fordyce has a similar role regarding Ben. As we've seen, Ben's redemption back into society - his 'straightening' - is close to being the heart of the film.

But about the body. Like Harry's, it comes and it goes. The explanation in this case is that it belongs to Mr Ackroyd from the house next door (number 15) and that Mr Ackroyd isn't really dead - only knocked out and left for dead by yet another crook lurking in the old house, number 17's burly owner called Sheldrake (Garry Marsh). Ackroyd had been spying on his neighbour for the police, but had been rumbled. Ben and Fordyce come upon the body together and, in one of Hitchcock's early uses of 'subjective effect', their startled faces are seen in the light thrown from a train that suddenly clatters by. Simultaneously, Hitchcock anamorphoses the image by filming it in a distorting mirror: one recalls a similar use of visual distortion in such German pictures as The Last Laugh (1924) and Überfall (1928). What makes Hitchcock's application of the effect particularly sophisticated is the way the characters' shock is matched to that of the film audience. You can see the same process working in Vertigo (1958) and North by Northwest (1959) where the director 'blanches' the image when a character feels faint or aghast - and in Psycho when as a distressed Norman Bates comes running towards the scene of Marion's murder the shot starts a few frames 'late', causing a jarring effect, visually and aurally.

Without letting on that he's a detective, Fordyce asks Ben to turn out his pockets. Amongst other items, we see a photo of Ben's young daughter (whom he identifies proudly, though with an ambiguous use of the past tense). Curiously, the chubby little girl in the photo looks rather like Hitchcock's daughter, Patricia, who was then about the same age. Perhaps it is her. There exists a contemporary studio still of Patricia visiting her father on the No. 17 set (reproduced in George Perry's 'Hitchcock', p. 27). Anyway, a note of pathos is struck, and affects Fordyce's (and our) attitude to the out-of-work Ben thereafter.

Typically Hitchcockian, though, is how the mood is quickly deflated by comedy and 'business'. (Freud, amongst others, has shown how to profess "I was only joking" is often the surest way of making one's point!) Grateful to Fordyce for a nip of brandy from a flask, Ben thinks he hears himself being offered another. In fact, the detective is continuing his interrogation and, dissatisfied with one of Ben's answers, asks him to "have another think". Replies Ben: "Don't mind if I do." This neatly establishes the character's propensity for alcohol, basis of an extended gag later. Meanwhile, when Fordyce's hand goes to his pocket, and Ben's eyes greedily follow it, it comes out not with the expected brandy flask but with just ... a handkerchief.

Hitchcock's ability, indeed his delight, in compounding his effects like this distinctly resembles that of another Cockney, the novelist Dickens. George Orwell has remarked that the "outstanding, unmistakable mark of Dickens's writing is the unnecessary detail" - as when, on a memorable occasion in 'Great Expectations',

corn and seed merchant Pumblechook is not just bound and gagged but tied to a bedpost and his mouth stuffed by his assailants "full of flowering annuals". Orwell hastens to qualify his use of the epithet "unnecessary", explaining that it is by means of just such details "that the special Dickens atmosphere is created". (You wonder what those people who object to the "sadistic" touches in Hitchcock's films would make of the above Dickens scene.) Allowing for the different constraints imposed by their respective media, it's possible that Hitchcock was knowingly imitating Dickens in this matter. He'd studied several of the author's novels at school.

Other possible parallells between Dickens and Hitchcock are something I'll come back to. For the moment, let's look further at Hitchcock's compounding of effects. A striking variant of the business with the handkerchief is played out when the 'uncle' makes a threatening gesture with a gun, then gratuitously sneezes, i.e. we expect one outcome but are presented with another (and an absurdly brandished handkerchief is again the pay-off: compare, in a more dramatic vein, the death of the dapper Cecil Parker character in The Lady Vanishes). Similarly, having established Fordyce's possession of a brandy flask, the film re-introduces it when Miss Ackroyd enters the film by falling through a skylight and Ben, mistaking her for a felon,[2] knocks her cold; fortunately, the brandy soon revives her. In turn, Ben is soon constantly clobbering the wrong person. This wild continuity of effect is like a game of tag, integral to the Hitchcock atmosphere and whirling the film towards its contrasting straight-down-the-line climax.

Strangely, Hitchcock did later say that No. 17 showed a "careless" approach to his work. Perhaps he meant that some of the film's abundant ideas could have done with more elaboration and, at the same time, more emphasis. Take what I'll call the 'wrist' motif. Left to mind the body, Ben finds on it a pistol and a pair of handcuffs. Both the latter items have roles to play. When Fordyce returns soon afterwards with the newly-arrived 'house-hunters' (we note that already the body has vanished!), Ben's truculent manner causes offence, and a scuffle ensues. Ben accidentally fires the pistol. A bullet, which would otherwise have hit Nora, is stopped by Fordyce's wrist. Not only is this unconvincing in itself (the fleshy part of a wrist able to halt a bullet?), but Hitchcock uses the incident as almost the only substantial basis for the relationship that later grows between the detective and the lady. It's the latter who saves Fordyce and Miss Ackroyd when they are strung up by the wrists and tied to a banister which collapses, suspending them in space. In turn, it's the detective who again saves Nora at the film's climax; this time, her wrists manacled by the crooks with Ben's handcuffs, she's in danger of drowning after the runaway train crashes onto the ferry at Dover. When they're both safely back on land, Fordyce/Detective Barton hints at the possibility that they might marry.

All this is like a rough sketch for the Hannay-Pamela relationship in The 39 Steps (1935). But there the couple go through successive trials together, constantly handcuffed to each other and sharing the enforced dangers and intimacies. Not only aren't there equivalent frissons in No. 17, but the latter film misleads its audience and ends up broken-backed. For a time, it looks like the film's love interest will develop between Fordyce and Miss Ackroyd, not Nora. Admittedly, the detective would have to be almost a cradle-snatcher, but it's really only in Miss Ackroyd's voice that her youth is stressed. (At one point, fearing that her father is dead, she cries out "Dad, Dad" in piteous, high-pitched tones.)[3] The at best cerebral 'wrist' motif, and the business of the purse, hardly prepare us for Fordyce's eventual choice of partner, especially as it's Miss Ackroyd - not Nora - who figures as co-victim with him in the crucial scene of the collapsing banister. (Never one to make the same mistake twice, Hitchcock got it right five years later with the scene of the collapsing mine-shaft in Young and Innocent ...)

Hitchcock buffs will have spotted yet another foreshadowing. One thinks of Rebecca (1940) and the need for Maxim to accept his new wife as something more than a girl. But whereas in that film the theme of 'growing up' is embedded in a complex psychology (both male and female, though the former has been neglected by Rebecca's recent feminist commentators), in No. 17 the theme is embryonic. More interesting is how Hitchcock, having generated certain basic situations, would so soon re-deploy them in meaningful ways in the later films.

Again, Hitchcock may have been "careless" thematically, and in matters of emphasis, in No. 17, but he was already showing-off his talent for building cinematic rhythms and piling on the action, i.e. two more forms of compounding. Just before the crooks bolt for the underground railway, an extended fist-fight breaks out between Sheldrake and Ackroyd. (No doubt Hitchcock relished such 'neighbourliness'.) In its way, the scene

is as elaborately staged and edited as the shower scene from Psycho. And like most Hitchcock set-pieces designed for maximum effect, it's shot mainly in close-ups. At first everything proceeds at normal speed: biffs and shoves are exchanged and Hitchcock allows his quick cutting and the inherent drama to carry our interest along. Then things become wilder, the pace speeds up (including that of the film image itself), and the characters fling each other about. At this point Ben is awoken from his 'slumbers' in the bathtub - where he'd earlier been dumped by Sheldrake - and enters the fray. Unfortunately, he misjudges his aim and knocks out the wrong man, Ackroyd ... Now, the scene having been milked for its full worth, the way is opened for the crooks to make their planned escape.

* * *

Taking the resisting Nora with them, the crooks leap aboard a goods train headed for Germany via the cross-Channel ferry. (Maurice Yacowar is wrong to say that it's "ludicrous" to think of a train running beneath a suburban house. Such a house exists just up the road from where I'm writing this! More to the film's point, the railway-under-a-house idea is intriguing anyway, worthy of several surrealist painters of the time like René Magritte and Paul Delvaux.) Although Fordyce and Ben soon give chase, only Ben manages to scramble aboard the crooks' train.

For the remainder of the film Fordyce goes hatless (shades of the "well-tailored" Thornhill in North by Northwest who finally doffs his jacket as the cliff-hanger climax begins). He'd stolidly worn the hat indoors since chasing and catching it when it blew away at the start of the film (compare also Foreign Correspondent), only to lose it again when the banister collapsed. Now he stands in the street, a forlorn figure, until an all-night bus conveniently comes by for him to commandeer.

Jack Cox's night cinematography never falters. If the earlier scenes are full of splendid effects (e.g. faces illuminated by candlelight), the scenes aboard the train and the pursuing bus are vivid, without murk and always well-matched to the model-shots that establish the surroundings. In turn, these model-shots invariably have verve and point, and they actually heighten the comedy-thriller element. As Yacowar adroitly says, the bus and train twice "seem to be converging until a sudden bridge slips the bus under the speeding train".

Even in the cutting and related matters, Hitchcock plays his jokes. When Ben scrambles aboard the train, he finds himself in an open van filled with cases of Emu Tonic Wine. After fortifying himself with a courage he's conspicuously lacked till now, he proceeds to edge along the lurching train to where he'd seen Nora and the crooks jump aboard. Somehow the train's movement doesn't affect him - a variant, this, on a joke involving a shipboard drunk in Rich and Strange (also 1932). Still, we follow his progress with concern until he reaches Nora's carriage where she's alone, the crooks having gone to confront the guard. Preparing to pull Ben inside, Nora exclaims, "You might have been killed" - whereupon a wipe-cut gives the impression of a passing train running him down! (That cut proves to be proleptic: at the film's climax a worker at the ferry dock is run down. Such preparing of the audience for a specific effect, again in line with Freud's theory of jokes, would become an integral part of Hitchcock's suspense technique: there's a classic instance in the river-caves scene of Strangers on a Train.)

The soundtrack, too, contributes to the excitement of the train scenes. The highly realistic clanking of the carriages provides an almost musical ground from which the film rhythmically cuts away and returns. Likewise the whine of the bus's motor contributes its note of urgency, allowing subtle effects like a cut to a hanging sign outside a tea-house when the bus speeds by. "Stop here for dainty teas" invites the sign, and the faintest of breezes sways the board as silence begins to settle again on the countryside.

Late in the piece, reminding us of how the chase has continued through the night, there's a shot of a sleeping village complete with 'dreaming spire'; in the sky, the first trace of dawn reveals some fluffy small clouds and the promise of a fine day ahead ...

But by now the crooks have shot the train's driver, and the train itself is out of control. Magisterially, Hitchcock cuts ahead to the dock where a ferry moves slowly to its berth. Then back to the speeding train. The inevitable crash is superbly filmed. Though all done with models, it's just as effective as the climax of Arthur Hiller's comedy-thriller Silver Streak (1976), in which a real (passenger-) train crashes at speed into its Chicago terminal.

* * *

The film's final image is of Ben. It's he who, like the jester at the end of Blackmail, literally has the last laugh. Safe after his ducking in the sea at Dover, and wrapped in a blanket (foreshadowing in this respect the cautionary endings of Psycho and Torn Curtain), he shows he's still the incorrigible rogue. Around his neck for safe-keeping, as he reveals with an obliging grin, is the missing Suffolk necklace. He'd pickpocketed it from Sheldrake back at the house.

So this dispossessed Cockney father helps save the day. There was never much risk of Hitchcock's audience being offended by the idea: a beloved Dickens character named Sam Weller, a Cockney valet, had long been, in Chesterton's phrase, "the great symbol of the populace peculiar to England". And weren't the crooks in No. 17 attempting to flee to Germany with a significantly-named piece of English jewellry?

Still, speaking of dispossessed characters, it was precisely the notion that Dickens spoke for the real downtrodden poor that Orwell strenuously objected to; and we should heed his point - for it presumably applies to Hitchcock, too - that Dickens "is a south-of-England man, and a Cockney at that, and therefore out of touch with the bulk of the real oppressed masses, the industrial and agricultural labourers". What Dickens "does not noticeably write about", adds Orwell, "is work". The charge is doubtless true, though scarcely unanswerable. For a start, there's more than one way, as Ben's case shows, of being downtrodden. A lack of work, for instance, has a universal significance. And again, just as Orwell, admirable novelist though he was, never wrote as good a book as Dickens's 'Great Expectations' or 'Bleak House', so Hitchcock's principal detractor on the grounds of his films' lack of serious social content, John Grierson, himself never went beyond making a few well-intentioned, but faintly absurd, documentaries about North Sea herring fishermen and railway workers on the mail train from London to Glascow. Perhaps film critic Andrew Sarris put the matter least prejudicially, in his book on film and politics, when he commented that James Joyce isn't Vladimir Lenin - and vice versa.

In fact, of course, No. 17 prepared the way for that spirited series of '30s comedy-thrillers like The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934), The 39 Steps, Young and Innocent and The Lady Vanishes which, seen today, must surely confound Hitchcock's critics. Not the least part of these films' vast appeal is how they feature some sort of "wrong 'un" - often in a broad or symbolic sense - at their picaresque centre: consider Canadian man-of-leisure Richard Hannay jaunting over Britain, yet pursued by both police and underworld figures, and grateful for whatever real kindness he encounters. Not much dialectical materialism there. But, inasmuch that we're all "wrong 'uns" one way or another, a figure like Hannay represents the 'Ben' in each of us - a 'travelled' Ben, though. Closer, indeed, to Joyce's 'common man', Leopold Bloom, whom Orwell nevertheless objected to for turning out "to be a Jew and a bit of a highbrow at that". (What would Orwell have made of 'Scottie' in Hitchcock's Vertigo - a Presbyterian, or non-believer, in a city of Catholics, one who visits something called the Argosy Bookstore and who is given to citing Chinese philosophy?)

I've come at the end of this article a long way from straight description of the journeyman thriller that No. 17 represents. But, then, so did Hitchcock come a long way from his earlier films. My point is that even in the later works it's possible to see something of the Cockney - person or essence - carrying on from the earlier ones.

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Notes

1. William Rothman, 'Hitchcock - The Murderous Gaze' (1982), p. 53. Rothman's "The Wrong One" is ultimately a damned figure - an interpretation not applicable to any of the characters in No. 17 (given the terms on which the film operates), I fancy.

2. Mistaken identity is commonplace in this film. Ben merely parodies it, becomes its butt.

3. In Shadow of a Doubt (1943) a sharp distinction is made in vocal tones between the young and dreaming

Teresa Wright character (whose voice tends to be shrill and excited) and the 'awakened' Teresa Wright who has learnt of her uncle's evil (at which time her voice becomes typically low and measured, approaching an adult's).

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'MacGuffin' 3 included articles on Asian Cinema, 'The Hitchcock Romance' and Hitchcock's The Lodger.

'MacGuffin' 4 included a long article on Hitchcock's Psycho.

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ODD SPOT: MUCH ADO ABOUT VERY LITTLE?

Like nothing so much, indeed, as a yachtboard version of Agatha Christie's 'Ten Little Indians', Herbert Ross's The Last of Sheila (1973) is a film curio which some people seem to have over-extolled. No doubt they were impressed in the first place by the film's writer-credits: the script was a combined effort by actor Anthony Perkins and composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim. The same people would have heard, too, how this murder mystery boasts other unlikely points of interest, in that several of its characters are satirical versions of well-known identities, and that the script itself is constructed as a form of elaborate British-style crossword where puns, anagrams and wordplays run rampant (well, almost). The film's title is itself a clue ...

It's certain that astute critic Pauline Kael was never among the film's admirers (she called it "witless" and "desiccated") but, at the other extreme, you had this amazing estimation of the film by James Monaco (in his 'The Connoisseur's Guide to the Movies'): "If James Joyce had made movies they might have looked something like this."

'MacGuffin' readers may care to check out The Last of Sheila for themselves ...

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 6 | February, 1992 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US5 £2.50

LETTERS

(No 'Editorial' this time, just a lot of what I think is exciting reading - starting with these informative letters. Thanks to all our contributors. Good viewing - Ken.)

Aurelia Di Camillo, Pordenone, Italy

I didn't succeed in opening a Hitchcock SIG in Italy, but fortunately I read about yours! I will like very much to be able to exchange information about Hitch with you and the others of your SIG.

* * *

Professor Thomas Elsaesser, Film and Television Studies, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Many thanks for your interest; as you see, there is a book of the [1980 Hitchcock] Conference. Enjoyed reading 'The MacGuffin'.

* * *

Charles Barr, School of English and American Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, England

Yes, I was at the 1980 Rome Conference, and well remember listening to the papers by [Claude] Beylie and [Jean] Douchet (among others). The Conference was trilingual, with earphone translations, and was curiously devoid of screenings - there were no films (as part of the event), and the organisers had laid on no visual aids, though at Douchet's insistence a 35mm projector was specially brought in to show an extract from Family Plot to illustrate his paper.

Thomas Elsaesser and I used to collaborate [at East Anglia] on a big course called "Hitchcock: English and American", fitted obviously to the nature of this school of studies; Hitchcock work now tends to be less intensive and to be subsumed under other topics, e.g. studies of silent film form or of a specific decade, although the contribution that any Hitchcock film makes to such courses is always vivid and important.

What would be particularly interesting [to see in 'The MacGuffin'] is a comparative survey of the way various courses in Britain and elsewhere have used, and do use, Hitchcock. The British Film Institute is about to launch its own MA film course, and plans to begin it with a substantial study of Hitchcock in terms of the various critical approaches. (Week 1 - the humanist approach - Robin Wood - etc etc.)

(Editor's note. My thanks to both Thomas Elsaesser and Charles Barr for responding to an enquiry about their participation in the 1980 Rome Conference - see 'Letters' in 'MacGuffin' 5. Professor Elsaesser has kindly sent us an Italian-language copy of his paper, "Il dandy in Hitchcock", this being how the paper was published in the subsequent book of the Conference. Very generously, Charles Barr has forwarded the English text of his own paper, "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British period", and it appears below. For the record, the book of the Conference contains in Italian all the papers that were given; it's called 'Per Alfred Hitchcock', is edited by Edoardo Bruno, and was published at Montepulciano, 1981.)

* * *

Professor Lesley Brill, Department of English, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA

I have indeed enjoyed reading 'The MacGuffin': a genuinely intelligent publication of interested amateurs that takes into account film studies to a considerable degree without deferring to its uniformities, its fads and fashions.

Hitchcock is taught at Wayne in virtually all introductory film courses and at higher levels in courses on single (or a few) directors and on film theory. I do only a little teaching here because of my administrative duties, but I have taught a graduate course on film theory and authorship that divided its movies between Hitchcock's and John Huston's - the latter an ongoing passion that I hope to address in writing one of these years.

* * *

Adrian Martin, Brighton, Victoria, Australia.

It was interesting to hear your comments on Bordwell's 'Making Meaning' [reviewed in this issue - Ed.]. I think I had two real problems with the book - I felt them as almost personal insults! The first is Bordwell's premise that all film criticism is basically 'institutional' - written by the academy, for the academy - which makes it all a pretty easy target for satire, as well as fair game for critique. Yet, even much of what he quotes as examples was written as labour of love stuff in struggling magazines, by 'freelance intellectuals' - stuff that probably never got anyone a job or promotion in any university anywhere. For Bordwell, there's 'journalism' - dismissed in about half a page - and then there's 'academic criticism', but nothing in-between. Yet so many people, projects, magazines happen in that free-thinking space between. 'The MacGuffin', for one!

The other thing I disagree with strongly is Bordwell's hostility towards any type of interpretation. Reading pieces in 'The MacGuffin', I am reminded again of how fertile and creative an open, speculative approach to interpretation can be. Bordwell's narrowly formalist approach, on the other hand, seems hardly like a holistic attempt to grasp films and the cinema-going experience - it just leaves out so much. Bordwell - like his even stricter colleague Noël Carroll - is obsessed with what can be 'proven', with empiricism, with collectively establishable and verifiable facts. I know what kind of excess on the other side he's reacting against, but I think he goes too far as well. Bordwell seems to paint any 'theme' or interpretation whatsoever as the analyst's sorry projection or hallucination into the film at hand. Yet themes (or ideas, symbols, meanings, motifs, whatever) are NOT just the coinage of analysts; they are part of the material that artists work with, shape, intuit - part of what drives them to make their art in the first place. So that's my instant rave on 'Making Meaning'!

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general-interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Chabrol's latest - was it inevitable?

Claude Chabrol (Le Boucher) is filming 'Madame Bovary', the classic novel by Gustave Flaubert about a provincial woman's passions. Isabelle Huppert plays the ill-fated Emma Bovary.

On location in Normandy, Chabrol admitted to 'Film Comment' (September-October, 1991) that he'd been foolish over the years to make so many potboilers, thinking at the time his direction could surmount the scripts' insufficiencies. It sounds like a backdown by the former film critic, who wrote a bold essay, "Big Themes, Little Themes", arguing that a director's personal style alone matters. Oddly enough, he may have found the idea in Baudelaire's essay on 'Madame Bovary' where Flaubert says, "I shall be able to show convincingly

that all subjects are equally good or bad according to the way they are treated, and that the most commonplace can become the best".

'Madame Bovary' has been filmed twice before: by Jean Renoir in 1934 and Vincente Minnelli in 1949. Alfred Hitchcock called Emma Bovary his favourite character in fiction.

And from Scorsese - expect the unexpected

After the stridences of Cape Fear, Martin Scorsese has announced that his next project will be an adaptation of Edith Wharton's Pulitzer Prize-winning 'The Age of Innocence', a story which begins in New York in the 1870s. Ellen Osenka, a former local society girl, has left her titled Polish husband abroad because of his dissipation. She meets Newland Archer, a young lawyer engaged to her shallow cousin, May Welland. Archer and Ellen experience a true communion of minds, yet he feels constrained not to break his engagement. Later, Ellen's family, dreading scandal, enlist Newland to persuade her against divorcing her husband. Her future ruined, she goes to live in Paris.

Scorses's producer, Barbara De Fina, says of the project: "It's about missed opportunity, which is a perfect subject for Marty. It's about repression."

* Meanwhile, Cape Fear's teenage actress, Juliette Lewis, has been featuring in the tabloids. Apparently, her 'innocent' image in Scorsese's film - dressed in white - doesn't at all match the reality - which concerns her appetite for drugs and living with older men. (Or does it? See the film.) The daughter of an actor who regularly appears in Clint Eastwood movies, she ran off three years ago with another actor. Now, aged all of 18, she's living with Thelma and Louise hunk Brad Pitt ...

An international reputation

Director Paul Cox (Man of Flowers, Vincent, A Woman's Tale) has gained acclaim around the world since coming to Australia from Holland in 1963, aged 23, and settling in Melbourne. His work has received elaborate analysis, as well as praise, in such publications as 'Film Quarterly' and 'The Village Voice'. Writing in the latter, Andrew Sarris called Vincent - The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh (1987) "the most profound exploration of an artist's soul ever to be put on the screen".

Recently, the Film Critics Circle of Australia gave Cox a special award. Taking time off from his several current productions, he flew up to Sydney to receive it. Now, as some of us know, Cox doesn't mind having a grumble, so he used the opportunity to tell the assembled critics that the only city in the world where A Woman's Tale (1991) was put down was, you've guessed it, Melbourne.

It's only fair to add that the same week saw the 10th birthday celebrations in Melbourne of Film Victoria, a government film-funding body that has helped start or further the careers of several of Australia's most successful filmmakers, including Cox, Fred Schepisi (The Devil's Playground), Bruce Beresford (The Getting of Wisdom) and Jocelyn Moorhouse (Proof).

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Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British period

(Editor's note. This is the complete text of a paper given by Charles Barr at the Hitchcock Conference held in Rome, Italy, on May 6-8, 1980. Sadly, Hitchcock had died on April 29 at his Hollywood home. Some notable Hitchcock collaborators attended the Conference: actors 'Tippi' Hedren and Farley Granger, scriptwriter Ernest Lehman, Hitchcock's longtime assistant Peggy Robertson. Charles Barr's paper is printed here for the first time in English.)

I intend to talk about Hitchcock's British work (the period before 1940), partly because this seems one of the contributions that the English contingent can appropriately make on this third day of the Conference,

but more importantly because of the need to question an imbalance that is familiar in the critical literature on Hitchcock and is evident in the work of this Conference itself: that is, a concentration on the American films at the expense of the British. Why does this imbalance seem so inevitable, so natural? Firstly, the films have become distant in time - it would be hard to bring together a cross-section of Hitchcock's collaborators from the British period to talk to us as 'Tippi' Hedren, Farley Granger, Ernest Lehman and Peggy Robertson have done so interestingly about the American period. Secondly, the British films have always been less widely distributed and less widely available: we have heard from Signor [Morando] Morandini how (for instance) only five out of all Hitchcock's British films had a normal commercial distribution in Italy. But, thirdly, there is a powerful critical orthodoxy created by writers who have had no problems of access to the films, notably Robin Wood, himself English, whose immensely influential book in 1965 treated them as mere works of apprenticeship.

Ironically Hitchcock himself contributed to the neglect of these pre-1940 films by the terms in which he described them even when he was expressing a preference for them over his Hollywood work. As we know, he was always ready to tell interviewers what they seemed to want to hear, to privilege the British or alternatively the American work according to the preferences and prejudices and nationality of his questioners. Here is what he told a British-born interviewer, W. J. Weatherby, in a late interview published only last Sunday ('Sunday Times', London, May 4, 1980):

> I think my English films are more realistic. I not only knew the way of life better, but I could risk subtler observation. My American films are more romantic, more like my dreams. The personal touch, what means most to me, has to be slipped in surreptitiously.

The words set out a contrast, then, between realism on the one hand and dream or fantasy on the other, and the context clearly suggests that the former is more highly valued. They also define the "personal touch" in terms of the "slipping in" of eccentric details. Now it was in very similar terms that Anglo-Saxon critics of the 1940s and '50s consistently elevated the British films above the American ones. It was a line most powerfully expressed by Lindsay Anderson, writing in England around 1950; the view is not yet completely dead; but it has become an anachronism which it is hard to take seriously - I refer not to the liking expressed for Hitchcock's British work but to the terms in which this liking is expressed. We have many models for reading the personal signature and thematic of a filmmaker, within a film and an oeuvre, which transcend the notion of individual touches or of explicit subject-matter. Likewise, the critical attitude that uses the words Dreamlike, Fantastic, Escapist, Romantic, Unrealistic, Fabricated, as terms of dispraise, putting them ipso facto lower than 'realistic' stories and films with a 'documentary' base, has also been overturned.

So it has seemed simple to accept the terms of the conventional contrast and to turn them upside down: to neglect the British work precisely as being what its champions (Anderson and co.) presented it as being: more realistic, more eccentric, and thus, by a slight extension, more superficial and less rich than the American films were now found to be. That is the attitude which still generally obtains and which Hitchcock himself in his understandable nostalgia went on from time to time abetting.

I don't wish to reverse the process again and denigrate the American period, which I believe does contain Hitchcock's richest work, but I do wish to argue, briefly and as lucidly as I can, for a different approach to the British films on the grounds that in general they have the same kind of complexity and the same kind of dreamlike narrative structures as his American work does.

Let me start by recalling a sequence from Hitchcock's final silent film, and one of the finest of all his films, The Manxman. Like many of the early films this is a triangle story: a woman hesitates between two men. It is set on an island, the Isle of Man. Kate, the heroine, promises to marry Peter. He goes abroad, she promises to wait for him. While he is away, Kate and Philip - who is Peter's friend from childhood - fall in love. Peter is reported killed. Kate and Philip continue meeting secretly and discuss whether to bring their love into the open. Suddenly, Hitchcock reveals to the audience that Peter is alive after all: we see him despatch a joyful telegram to Philip to say he is coming home. Next scene: Kate leaves her house and runs to the shore to keep a rendezvous with Philip. He starts to speak to her (remember that the film is silent). Cut to the image of a ship at sea, sinister-looking, puffing out black smoke.

Now what is the impact and meaning of this image, the reading of it made by the spectator, at this point? It seems to me there are four possibilities:

- It is Kate's, or the couple's, mental image, located in no specific space; Philip is telling her the news that Peter is on his way back.

- It is their visual image: the next shot may show them looking at it.

- It is a narrative transition to a distant scene: Hitchcock is showing us Peter, en route.

- The ship is nearer, offshore, but the characters haven't seen it.

That is, the status of the image may be subjective/far (mental image), subjective/near, objective/remote, or objective/near.

What happens is that as the scene proceeds we are shown that the boat has come within the couple's field of view: he sees it, and she sees it, and they react to it, in turn. But this placing of the boat within the scene does not, I suggest, resolve the previous ambiguity. It is not a case of a confusion which has now been cleared up. The boat remains both actual and symbolic, both present to their imaginations and present in reality: we get these impressions in quick succession, and they merge, to give, very powerfully, the sense that their fears are coming true, they are starting to live through their nightmare. And this is a process which the film rigorously follows through. That hesitation between subjective and objective, actual and symbolic, evoked by the image of the boat, could have been illustrated in many other images and sequences in The Manxman, and it is the principle on which the whole film, one might ultimately say the whole of Hitchcock's work, is structured. On the one hand we see characters living their lives in an external world objectively presented, on the other the flow of images is subjectively motivated, catching us up in the dreams, fantasies, nightmares of these characters.

I want to say more about how this principle operates by referring to some of Hitchcock's sound films of the 1930s. Let me first say more about the term, 'dreamlike' in this context. Hitchcock does not simply present an exotic dream-world on screen in which a spectator can lose himself, or herself. Nor, often, does he insert dream or nightmare sequences in which we see a representation, clearly marked as such, of the character's dream. Nor, I think, does Hitchcock ever use the device of showing us an ostensibly 'real' sequence which is revealed in retrospect as subjective - "it was all a dream"; perhaps the closest he comes to this is in the tongue-in-cheek ending of North by Northwest, with the near-magical transition from extreme peril on the cliffs of Mount Rushmore to the top bunk of the railway cabin where Eve and Roger went to sleep mid-way through the film - as if it was all their dream. The delicacy, the non-explicitness, of this 'hint' is crucial. Dream or reality? (within a narrative that is in any case fiction). We need a concept that is at once more fluid and more precise, and for this I would propose, at least half-seriously, the idea of hypnagogia. The term is related to hypnosis but it is not identical with it. It has been used to describe the state between sleeping and waking in which an intense, fevered succession of images passes through the mind: the sequence is more rational, more subject to control, than the images of dream, but less rational and inhibited than our waking perceptions. Hypnagogis is a sort of trance, and hypnagogic images are images seen in a heightened trance-like state. I suggest that this kind of state links spectator and protagonist in many Hitchcock films.

If one had to define, in a single phrase, the subject of Hitchcock's British films, the best attempt at a definition might be this: a lady in a trance. Sometimes there is a man in a trance, sometimes the conflict within a character is presented without a strong subjective dimension, but frequently at the centre, as in The Manxman, there is a lady in a trance. Think of Murder!, Hitchcock's early sound film, where the lady accused of the crime enters the plea that if she did it it must have been when she was not conscious of herself, that it was, to quote her words, "daytime sleepwalking". Think of Alice, the daytime sleepwalker of Blackmail, a film absolutely full of the kind of hesitation between subjective and objective that I pointed to in The Manxman, and as complex, as multi-layered, a film as any Hitchcock ever made. Think of Madeleine Carroll in the latter half of The Secret Agent, and of Sylvia Sydney in the latter half of Sabotage. And consider the process by which, in the three purest adventure films of the 1930s, the act of sleeping is systematically inscribed in the narrative.

Every textbook on editing records, from The 39 Steps, the famous cut from the scream of the landlady discovering the dead body to the whistle of the train carrying Hannay to Scotland, but remember too that Hitchcock dissolves from the railway line to Hannay's sleeping face. It is part of a rigorous pattern whereby, until the final resolution, whenever Hannay is absent from the action we are shown either before, or retrospectively, that he is asleep or otherwise unconscious.

If one segments the narrative of The Lady Vanishes in terms of time and location, it falls into four very uneven sections: Day one, the hotel; Day two, the train; Day three, the ship (a single image); Day four, London. The real structuring principle of the film is seen if one divides it in terms of the periods of unconsciousness experienced by the heroine, Iris, and the blocks of action that take place during, and between, these periods. In succession, Iris sleeps, swoons, sleeps, swoons, hallucinates, swoons, sleeps, sleeps, and finally pretends to sleep. The whole film proceeds like a fantastic dream from which she intermittently awakes, then into which she plunges again, just as it is a fantastic adventure for the spectator, who is simultaneously conscious and unconscious of his own location in the cinema. And this hypnagogic discourse, based on the central character's fluctuations between sleep and waking, is very precisely motivated both in this film and in The 39 Steps. Both Richard Hannay and Iris become the focus of strong conflicts connected with sex and marriage. A chaotic world of unfulfilled sexual energy is created in the opening scenes in the Music Hall, and in the Hotel. Hannay himself is unattached; Iris is reluctantly engaged. Hannay is shaken up, meets a provocative woman, sleeps, wakes to nightmare, sleeps again, wakes (on the train), and so on. Iris is shaken up, sleeps, wakes to find by her bed (to fantasise?) a handsome man who creates new conflicts, is stunned by a blow on the head, wakes (on the train), and so on. At each stage it is as if she (like Hannay) is dreaming or hallucinating but at no point is this made explicit; the double status of the discourse, subjective/objective, is scrupulously maintained. The effect created is of a heroine playing out, living through, her fantasies, nightmares, conflicts. Or, to express it in reverse: what is being played out in objective narrative terms is a projection of meaningful interior fantasies, nightmares, conflicts, and works in that way, for the characters and through them for the audience.

Finally, Young and Innocent - one of Hitchcock's purest and most self-conscious narratives, the last of his 'Golden Sextet' of the 1930s (the others being the two films just discussed, plus The Man Who Knew Too Much, Sabotage, and The Secret Agent), and the only one of the six that has no political dimension. Like all of them it is centred on the formation, or consolidation, of a couple.

Analysis divides the film into 19 scenes, marked by change in location (the scene on the beach, the visit to the Aunt, and so on). What this analysis does is to reveal an extraordinary and perhaps calculated symmetry in what might be termed the hypnagogic structure.

We start with the young man, Robert: caught up in violence, accused of murder. In scene 3, in the police station, he swoons, faints; and Erica enters the room and the film, as if summoned up by his unconscious. In scene 8, on the run, he sleeps: Erica finds him and rescues him, thereby for the first time committing herself to helping him. In scene 12 - the 8th from the end - she sleeps, and he saves her from danger. And in scene 17 - the 3rd from the end - she swoons, faints, on her bed, and he enters her room by the window to save her like the fulfilment of her dream. Which sets it up for the happy ending: their unmasking of the real murderer, and their union. Remember that Robert has been established at the start as a writer of film scripts. It's as though he created a screen fantasy for himself, summoned up a woman to love and then projected a reciprocal (symmetrical) fantasy onto her; and this is also a satisfying fantasy or fairy-tale for his film's audience.

Which of course anticipates very closely the intricate structure of reciprocal fantasies in Suspicion, made by Hitchcock in Hollywood three years later - not to mention later films. The surface disparities between these two films (e.g. in acting style, and location versus studio shooting) are less important than the structural connections. There is no clear dividing line between Hitchcock's British and American work. I suggest that a close, and unpatronising, study of the British films can lead us to a more accurate grasp of his work as a whole, and to a thorough and long overdue revaluation of the British films themselves.

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Or: the world as viewed from Down Under. Evan Williams lives in Sydney and reviews films for 'The Australian' newspaper; Tom Ryan lives in Melbourne, where he lectures in film studies and writes film reviews for 'The Sunday Age'. Both Evan's and Tom's 'ten best of 1991' lists include films shown at the Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals.

Evan's list

1. 'Monsieur Hire' (Patrice Leconte)
2. 'Ju Dou' (Zhang Yimou)
3. 'Daddy Nostalgie' (Bertrand Tavernier)
4. 'Thelma and Louise' (Ridley Scott)
5. 'Architecture of Doom' (Sweden 1989. Direction & screenplay: Peter Cohen. Fascinating doco. on Nazi aesthetics.)
6. 'Dances With Wolves' (Kevin Costner)
7. 'Cross My Heart' (Jacques Fansten)
8. '35 Up' (Michael Apted)
9. 'Waltzing Regitze' (Kaspar Rostrup)
10. 'Life is Sweet' (Mike Leigh)

Tom's list

1. 'Miller's Crossing' (Joel Coen)
2. 'Thelma and Louise'
3. 'Monsieur Hire'
4. 'The Silence of the Lambs' (Jonathan Demme)
5. 'The Sheltering Sky' (Bernardo Bertolucci)
6. 'Trust' (Hal Hartley)
7. 'A Short Film About Love' (Kryzystof Kieslowski, an expanded and re-edited version of Part VI of 'The Decalogue')
8. 'The Company of Strangers' (Cynthia Scott)
9. 'True Love' (Nancy Savoca)
10. 'LA Story' (Mick Jackson)

(Editor's note. Tom adds that, for him, the best new Australian film in 1991 was Jocelyn Moorhouse's debut feature, Proof - "remarkably simple but it resonates with an originality and a cinematic savvy that makes it one of the most impressive Australian films in recent years".)

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BOOK REVIEW

Bordwell, David: 'Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema' (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1989; hardcover/paperback)

When critics and scholars use their favourite method for describing a film - namely, interpreting it - don't they in some fashion "make" the meaning they claim to find? Armed with that question, David Bordwell has investigated his academic colleagues' frequently unself-critical approach to the task of criticism. And though he's too canny to bring individual accusations, he exposes much wrongdoing. You may read him fascinated. He's a uniquely vigorous investigator - witness his book's 800 footnotes. On the other hand, you may also still arrive at the last page and hear yourself asking, so what else is new? It's that kind of work.

Perhaps I can best review it by ranging further afield to cite the following three 'case studies'. (For more on Bordwell, see 'Letters' in this issue.)

Case Study 1. A few years ago the New Zealand film magazine 'Illusions' printed a feminist critique of a local feature, The Scarecrow. Having consulted all the right sources (e.g. John Berger's 'Ways of Seeing' and Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"), the critic set about showing how the film's character called Prudence, a "ripening" teenager, constituted a threat which would have "to be controlled, to be silenced" by men - both in and beyond the film. The general idea was that "the [pernicious] patriarchal system is inscribed within our cultural inheritance".

Well, no doubt it was commendable of the critic to sound that warning - even if, by 1986, it had become as commonplace in film journals as the other warning you saw on cigarette packs. The question is, did it apply in this case? 'Illusions' magazine decided to look further. Alongside the article I've just quoted, it printed a spirited defence from the film's director, Sam Pillsbury. And what he said was: The Scarecrow decidedly "does not 'teach [Prudence] a lesson by bringing her to the point of death' [after she is raped]", but rather "makes a statement within a comic/horror genre about the vulnerability of beauty and

innocence ... ". As for his critic's claim that Prudence was "meant [by himself and ultimately the audience] to be controlled, to be silenced", he was equally adamant: "This is bullshit, and it's not there in the film". How could it be, he asked, when virtually all the film's male characters are depicted as brutes, the product of their small-town environment?

Pillsbury had his own sources: himself as the film's director, and his personal experience. "I lived in a town like that once, and I wanted to say something about it." So where does that put his feminist critic's review? I'd say, in the cold. Reality must be respected, and it would be perverse in the extreme to still claim that The Scarecrow is "meant" to assert male control (as mediated in particular by the power of the viewer's gaze and his/her "visual pleasure"). I use the word "perverse" designedly.

Hence, this seems a case where the critic is guilty of imposing what Bordwell calls a "top-down" meaning. But notice, even he states his point as some sort of logical inference, rather than arriving at it through close investigation of particular films.[1] (I'll take up this matter in a moment.) The very term "top-down" is borrowed from cognitive psychology. Also, notice that at no stage does Bordwell, the canny diplomatist as far as his colleagues are concerned, allow himself judicious use of an expression like Pillsbury's "bullshit" - which seems to me a pity.

Case Study 2. As an instance of a film device being able to bear (different) "character-centred" meanings, Bordwell cites two feminist readings of the boathouse scene in Hitchcock's Rebecca. He notes that "both critics treat the film as a contradictory text" [i.e. one where the film's meaning indeed exceeds the sum of the director's intentions, to the point where inner contradictions appear as symptoms]. For Tania Modleski, the film is about female Oedipal relations, about how far the Joan Fontaine character may 'grow up' under patriarchy. For Mary Ann Doane, it's about how the same timid character doesn't grow up, i.e. about how the male gaze keeps oppressing her.

Merely a matter of emphasis, you might think. But now consider the boathouse scene. This is where Maxim (Laurence Olivier) reveals that he hated Rebecca - after initially being "enchanted by her". As he describes his behaviour on the night of her death, the camera moves over empty space. For Modleski, Rebecca is taunting Maxim from beyond the grave. The camera's movement, in Bordwell's paraphrase, "enacts the return of the repressed". But for Doane the shot is "itself repressive. She [Doane] takes it as Fontaine's optical point-of-view shot, transferred from Maxim and synchronised with his voice-off explanation." That is, Fontaine is made to identify with Maxim's dominant gaze.

However, it seems to me that neither critic gets to the nub of the scene. Neither of them sees that Maxim is probably lying - not just about whose body he'd identified at the first inquest, but about the degree of his guilt for Rebecca's death ... Describing the fateful night, he says that Rebecca had admitted she was "incapable of love, or tenderness, or decency". She'd then taunted him by asking, "Aren't you going to kill me?" The screenplay continues:

> MAXIM. ... I suppose I went mad for a moment - I must have struck her. She stood staring at me.
>
> The view moves down to the floor, indicating the place where Rebecca had stood.
>
> MAXIM'S VOICE. She looked almost triumphant - and then she started toward me again, smiling. Suddenly she stumbled and fell.
>
> The scene moves over to take in the ship's tackle on the floor.

Maxim adds that when he looked down, Rebecca was dead ... Now, let's go over the scene again. Rebecca appears to die after hitting her head on the ship's tackle, i.e. Maxim doesn't actually kill her and the Hayes Office has nothing to object to. Whereas, I'd say the film is hinting that he probably does kill her (as in the novel): he strikes her in one of his notorious temper tantrums, and she lives just long enough to give an "almost triumphant" smile. Remember, she'd been told by her doctor that she was going to die of cancer, anyway ...

In other words, the scene represents another of Hitchcock's so-called 'subjective' flashbacks, like that in The Lodger (which I analysed in 'MacGuffin' 3). There, the aristocratic Ivor Novello character appears unable to face the prospect of his innocent young sister 'growing up', so has her killed at her coming-out ball. In the case of Rebecca, by an exact substitution, the aristocratic Maxim can't face sharing Rebecca with her other lovers, so takes the opportunity she offers him of going "mad" and killing her in the boathouse (scene of her 'affairs', i.e. in his eyes an emblem of the fallen world). Afterwards, the respective characters - the Ivor Novello character and Maxim - lie about what has happened, even to themselves.

One may well ask what Rebecca symbolised to Maxim, and therefore what he effectively ends up repressing. I suggest that the answer is something like: sexuality in its wildest and most undifferentiated, i.e. 'uncivilised', aspects[2] - or, alternatively, what the philosopher Schopenhauer called sheer blind Will (hence the appositeness of the film's identifying Rebecca with the sea).

Maxim and the Joan Fontaine character, the second Mrs De Winter, will henceforth be living a lie together. (Again there are precedents/parallels in Hitchcock: for instance, the end of Sabotage.) Ironically, this marks the turning point in the marriage, and the second Mrs De Winter does indeed begin to grow up. For the first time, as the screenplay puts it, she becomes "intelligent, mature, taking command of the situation".

So, how does my interpretation of the boathouse scene affect the readings proposed respectively by Modleski and by Doane? Clearly, it vindicates them to a degree, i.e. concerning Maxim's fundamentally repressive character. Yet to a greater extent I'd say it shows them to be partial, even dubious. Both readings seem to me to generally ignore the film's crucial sense of two imperfect human beings - Maxim and his new wife - striving to realise their love. (It's surely what audiences most respond to.) In details, too, the readings seem to me questionable. For instance, Modleski claims that the reason the film doesn't resort to an actual flashback is that it wants to emphasise Rebecca's absence and 'lack', i.e. "an elaborate sort of castration joke" at Maxim's and the (presumably male) spectator's expense. Whereas, if Maxim is telling a lie, an altogether more probable reason for not showing the flashback is that it would diminish the scene's ambiguity (as in the line, "I suppose I went mad ... I must have struck her") - and showing the 'real' Rebecca would effectively stop her being 'all things to all men' (and women) ...

Likewise, Doane is correct in noting that Maxim's camera viewpoint comes to be shared by the Joan Fontaine character (when she learns he'd hated Rebecca) - but surely not as a means of showing her subordination. Quite the reverse, i.e. it emphasises that she now feels on equal terms with Maxim.

Notice that I'm not denying that Rebecca does "win in the end", just as Maxim had foreseen. If she'd lived, she would have used his aristocratic pride to make him pretend he'd fathered her child. In her "almost triumphant" death, she uses that same pride to make him live another lie - and to keep her successor childless. As I say, the film plays as an elaborate allegory of a fallen world, and one with its fair share of Freudian "discontents" ...

To return to Bordwell. It's possible he's too inhibited by the notion in modern criticism of the 'death of the author'. At any rate, he doesn't seem to me to get close enough to a complex film like Rebecca to fully assess the use of the critical strategies he describes. Towards the end of the book, he compares seven different readings of Hitchcock's Psycho in order to show "that the critical institution offers a diversified but not unlimited range of interpretive options". The chapter is neatly done - in its almost 'behaviourist', i.e. surface, kind of way.

Case Study 3. I first encountered the influential writings of Stephen Heath in an article he contributed to 'Screen' magazine about Hitchcock's Suspicion. The particular scene Heath described has two local police officers waiting downstairs to interview Lina Aysgarth (Joan Fontaine) in her country home. Heath notes, en passant, the presence in the scene of an 'abstract' painting. It's a painting which confounds the more junior police officer, who's clearly not a very bright chap. The score even pokes gentle fun at him with little trills on the piano. Unfortunately, Heath at no stage gives the slightest sign he's aware of this Hitchcock joke - which in its way anticipates Vertigo -[3] for plainly he has more convoluted business to pursue ...

Over the years, I read more Heath - nearly always protestingly. Then one day, after an extended interchange in 'October' magazine between Heath and rival critic Noël Carroll, my hopes were raised that he'd finally been demolished! But apparently that didn't happen. In Bordwell's book, which only 'quotes from the best', Heath is mentioned several times - and several more times than Carroll. Mind you, I again see evidence that Bordwell is just too polite: he refuses to call bullshit by its proper name. On one occasion (p. 221), he cites a particularly obscure - some would say, obnoxious - Heath passage from 'Screen', then follows it with a deadpan comment that "Anyone who complains about the style here is rebuked by this reply [from editor Ben Brewster, in the next issue]:

> No one writes difficultly in Screen for the sake of difficulty ...

Yet that reply just aggravates the problem. Whatever happened to euphony, concreteness, conciseness? After all, Brewster could have written:

> No writer for Screen is deliberately being difficult ...

But enough. Bordwell tells us how there's a great deal wrong with academic film theory and film criticism - and frequently the use, or rather abuse, of one by the other - but I'm unconvinced he offers insight for the sincere practising specialist. He discusses at length critics' rhetoric, or sleight-of-hand, yet never really distinguishes it from some accepted writing skills. (In both cases, you have to know what you're doing and be responsible.) So here's a parting thought. Perhaps one major problem with film criticism today is that some of its practitioners ignore what Schopenhauer often warned of: the need to distinguish between a (relatively concrete) percept and an (abstract) concept. If you mistake the latter for the former, you risk losing yourself and your readers in, precisely, the abstract - rather like Hitchcock's junior policeman.

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Notes

1. I see what Bordwell is doing. As he says in the Preface: "In order to study critical practice as such, we must pretend that all theories are correct ... and all critics are right. Holding partisan debates in abeyance helps us trace out underlying norms." My point later in the text, though, concerns how Bordwell's approach is 'behaviourist' and life-denying, and may itself be 'part of the problem' of modern criticism. For a suggestive example of critical obtuseness, induced by a scholar's use of an earlier Bordwell text in exegeting Hitchcock's The Wrong Man, see note 9 of my article on that film elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', and compare the original article in M. Deutelbaum and L. Poague (eds), 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986), pp. 214-15.

2. Rebecca may well be modelled on playwright Henrik Ibsen's Rebecca Gamvik in 'Rosmersholm' (1886), about whom Freud wrote brilliantly as ever in his essay "Some Character-Types Met With in Psychoanalytic Work" (1916). Freud characterised Ibsen's Rebecca as "a freethinker" brought up "to despise the restrictions which a morality founded on religious belief seeks to impose on the desires of life". In the script of Hitchcock's film, Rebecca is called "the beautiful Rebecca Hildreth", but the film itself changes the surname - most suggestively - to what sounds like "Henricks" or "Hendrich".

3. In the light of my closing remarks in this review, compare Hitchcock's comment to Truffaut that "Directors who lose control are concerned with the abstract".

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Dramatic Film Music in Hollywood's Golden Years (concluded)

One of the more distinguished film composers after the coming of sound was Dmitri Tiomkin who arrived in Hollywood in 1929. Born in St Petersburg, Tiomkin had been more used to the idioms of Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Puccini and the young Stravinsky, than the lush contrapuntal lines of the late German Romantic scoring. However he quickly became fascinated by the legends of the American West. If one were to name the twenty best Westerns, Tiomkin would be found to have scored at least half of them. Yet the score which made him famous, that for Frank Capra's Lost Horizon (1937), had nothing to do with the American idiom. An enormous creation for nearly one hundred and twenty instrumentalists, it showed the composer's love of exotic and colourful sounds. More than a dozen percussion instruments, bells, gongs, gamelans, even Tibetan horns, as well as the full complement of symphonic instruments, were employed by Tiomkin to evoke the Himalayan never-never world of Shangri-La. Even the hard-bitten Harry Cohn of Columbia was deeply impressed, and if the film's art-deco visual splendours have faded a little, Tiomkin's rich Eurasian sound fabric has not. Oddly enough, Lost Horizon is at its most affecting when just a few instruments in chamber ensemble underline the meditative inwardness of the hero Robert Conway and his love for Sondra.

Tiomkin was fond of employing voices and choral effects in his scores, and the cliché of the hero and heroine riding off into the sunset to a hymnody of wordless singers was virtually his invention. Many of Tiomkin's best Western scores - for Duel in the Sun, Red River, Giant, High Noon and Rio Bravo - use the human voice in some fashion. Duel in the Sun (1947) has one of his most eloquent scores, with the cowboy folk song, Indian motifs, Spanish dance rhythms and the nostalgic Southern ballad all woven into a passionate, restless score which erupts violently at each new outrage wrought by Lewton McCanless, the lustful anti-hero. Red River (1948) was more orthodox, using snatches of old cowboy and military songs while matching them with sweeping passages of brass and percussion to mark the passage of a vast herd of cattle. Abrupt transitions between a ghostly and tender strain of melody for intimate scenes and sonorous blasts from the full orchestra to evoke landscapes and human conflicts was Tiomkin's most distinctive trademark.

'MacGuffin' readers will recall that Tiomkin made a valuable contribution to the Alfred Hitchcock canon with his sinister, quirky music for Strangers on a Train (1951) and his only slightly less arresting score for I Confess (1953).

Miklos Rozsa was perhaps the best-known and best-rewarded of all the older generation of Hollywood composers. Hungarian-born, he made his start in movies by doing work for Alexander Korda's London Films - first with Knight Without Armour (1937) and then the visually superb The Thief of Baghdad (1940). It is, of course, his contribution to the great historical epics Quo Vadis (1952), Ben Hur (1958) and El Cid (1962) for which he will best be remembered. Rozsa's deep musical scholarship and mastery of antique musical modes and idioms made him the acknowledged master of the sword and toga epic. The material he wrote for this genre is arguably better than his scores for several modern melodramas - Spellbound (1945) excepted - even those as famous as The Lost Weekend (1945) and Brute Force (1947). The reason lies in his curious inability to get away from an obsessive four-note ostinato figure with a rising accent on the third note which probably derived from the Hungarian folk idiom. It imparts a kind of dum-dum-DE-dum monotony to his writing which makes one modern Rozsa score often sound very much like another. Also his music for modern drama tends to be unrelenting and sombre - strings, horns and trombones mezzo-forte in lower register - with little light relief for contrast.

Some of the loveliest music Rozsa ever wrote was for Quo Vadis, notably the love-death theme for Petronius and his slave Eunice which was inspired by an ancient refrain in the Phrygian mode. El Cid too contains some magnificent heraldic and battle music, especially the startling use of full solo concert pipe organ at the end to mark the entry of the mounted corpse of El Cid into final battle.

Alfred Newman was inextricably linked as musical director with Twentieth Century Fox for most of his career, often being assisted by his able but less gifted brother Lionel. Newman was the first great American-born studio composer, and his finest scores rank with the best ever written for the medium. Like Steiner and Korngold at Warners, he fought for and got the best sound-recording and acoustics for his music then available. He did most of his earliest work as freelance when he wrote music for Goldwyn and others. His first really splendid score was for RKO's The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1940) - still the best evocation of

medieval life ever mounted on a studio lot. For this Newman borrowed a style inspired by the 16th century polyphonic master Palestrina and the Spanish master Tomas de Victoria, since actual music from the late Middle Ages was too restricted in range and colour. Newman sometimes borrowed freely from his own previous work, having no time to constantly develop new material whilst in his executive role at Fox. Thus the yearning love theme for Goldwyn's These Three (1936) appeared glowingly amplified and embellished as the love theme for Larry and Isobel in The Razor's Edge (1946), one of Newman's very finest scores. The final Alleluia for The Hunchback of Notre Dame in 1940 appeared again as the jubilant climax for his Academy Award setting for The Song of Bernadette (1943). This huge score with its impassioned outpouring of many themes illustrating spiritual love, human devotion and peasant simplicity was Newman's own favourite.

Newman's familiar idiom was marked by his preference for wide octave leaps between high-pitched, ardent, almost Mahlerian, writing for strings and heavy bass chords, frequently accented by bass drum. The unique intensity of his string-writing was shown at its best in themes illustrating erotic absorption or religious ecstasy, but he could be at home with a Gershwin-like symphonic jazz idiom as well. Possibly his most popular score was for the disappointing but costly swashbuckler Captain from Castile (1947). The concluding march theme, 'Conquest', eventually entered the standard repertoire for brass band. Oddly enough, Newman's often-mentioned early score for Wuthering Heights (1939) sounds trite, sentimental and very 'un-Brontë'. It has not stood the test of time.

Bernard Herrmann ranks as the last of the great composer-pioneers of the serious Hollywood score, and certainly not the least. He has become known as the quintessential Hitchcock composer. Herrmann's scores are full of that sense of danger which the great suspense films demand. His music is full of wild, hurtling chases, impending threats, and escapes which can diminish swiftly to a mere violinistic thread of sound. He also is master of the passage of high expectancy or some slightly astringent adagio for an erotic encounter. His score for Hitchcock's North by Northwest (1959) establishes its snarling force at the start; the tingling main 'pursuit' theme, with its spiky, staccato rhythm and shrieking woodwinds, is one of his most memorable creations. By contrast, Vertigo (1958) - some would say Hitchcock's masterpiece - has long sequences of brooding mystery below a surface of dream-like calm. These require extended slow lines of string writing with soft low-pitched woodwinds as Scottie trails the haunted Madeleine about San Francisco and up to Muir Woods. Vertigo shows that Herrmann could shift easily from the relative menace and acidity of his dramatic scoring to a clean, spare lyricism when required. There are echoes of the same dream-like quality in the superb sea music the composer wrote for Fox's The Ghost and Mrs Muir (1947).

The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) required Herrmann not only to write the score but to conduct part of it on screen. In an agreed in-joke between Hitchcock and Herrmann, the composer decided to copy the master's trademark of briefly inserting himself into a film by appearing as the conductor in the Royal Albert Hall sequence. There are those who prefer the more briskly-edited 1934 original of this movie but Herrmann's contribution makes it 'no contest' when the two sound tracks are compared.

As film composer Herrmann will always be associated with his first great success Citizen Kane (1941). The film has a main theme of doom-laden power but it also contains a veritable cornucopia of moods, tempos and styles, all created to match the fast-moving documentary-like script. One sequence - the famous 'excerpt' from the bogus opera 'Salambo' - requires poor Susan Kane to sing a role against a vast fin-de-siecle symphony orchestra which her frail night-club voice cannot possibly cope with. So unerring was Herrmann's taste and scholarship that the sequence later passed into the standard repertoire as a soprano showpiece for singers like Kiri Te Kanawa. Director of the CBS network symphony orchestra as early as 1940, Herrmann was also a distinguished independent composer of many orchestral works, an opera ('Wuthering Heights') and a cantata ('Moby Dick'). His death marked the end of an era of full-blooded traditional scoring for the motion picture, which even the booming cinema sound resources of today cannot surpass and only rarely emulate. Herrmann was a significant transitionary figure between the old Wagnerian composing style of the 'thirties and 'forties and the modern idiom. He was capable of any style except rock-and-roll which, like many of his cultured contemporaries, he detested.

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* Excerpts from Dmitri Tiomkin's music for the Western is collected on a Silva Screen CD. A full suite from Lost Horizon, together with other Tiomkin material, is available in the RCA Classics CD series. Similarly,

there is a RCA CD devoted to the work of Alfred Newman and another to that of Miklos Rozsa. Two complete CDs from MGM are separately devoted to the Rozsa scores from Quo Vadis and Ben Hur. Bernard Herrmann is generously represented on record with the complete score for The Ghost and Mrs Muir on Varese-Saraband CD. There is a disc of selections from Herrmann's scores for Hitchcock on Decca/London CD - also a disc of his material from several Adventure films including Journey to the Centre of the Earth on the same label.

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Contributors to this issue

Charles Barr teaches film at the University of East Anglia, and has been prominent in English film criticism since helping to found 'Motion' ("The University Film Magazine") in the '60s. His books include 'Ealing Studios' and 'Laurel & Hardy'. His favourite English Hitchcock is The Manxman.

Ronald Conway is an Australian psychologist and author. Like one of his favourite composers, Ralph Vaughan Williams, he has "always preferred the imperfections of epics to the perfection of miniatures".

Ken Mogg once watched Hitchcock direct Family Plot. He lives near downtown Melbourne, Australia.

Irene Renata Radek is film reviewer for Mensa's 'International Journal' and Canadian Mensa's 'MC^2'. She's a talented actress and a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles.

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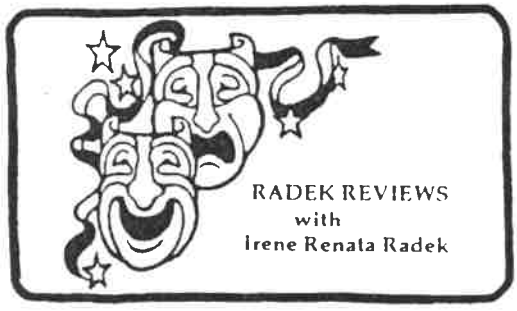
RADEK REVIEWS WRAP-UP 1991

(a) The 1991 Renie Awards



BEST FILM: The Fisher King

And now for something completely different ... The Fisher King never resorts to often tedious film formulae - rather, it reaches for the cinematic moon and firmly hangs on for the duration. It mixes most of life's ingredients in a completely novel and entirely entertaining way: reality and fantasy, love and hate, music and pain, comedy and tragedy, passion and apathy, riches and poverty, laughter and terror. Maybe it hits too close to home for a lot of the Academy's fat-cat conspicuous consumers who find it too uncomfortable to vote for a film about the homeless (an obscure documentary perhaps - a star-filled feature, highly doubtful). Regardless, The Fisher King is by far the best film of 1991.

Conversely, JFK is a long-winded bore (except for Gary Oldman - see below), Bugsy is classy but forgettable and none of '91's other films even come within a whisper of The Fisher King's entertaining originality.

Furthermore, I don't believe that an animated film should be placed in the same category with live action movies. Though Disney's Beauty and the Beast is truly wonderful, there are enough animated films in release to warrant their own separate category.

BEST ACTOR: Val Kilmer, The Doors

Though the film is positively putrid, Val Kilmer is nothing short of phenomenal as dead rock legend and all-around self-destructive egomaniac Jim Morrison. Recreating a historical figure - especially one still fresh in most people's minds - is an extraordinary challenge which Kilmer meets head-on; his onscreen concert performances (wherein Kilmer actually does the singing) are so eerily accurate that The Doors sometimes appears to be a documentary.

Unfortunately, the film was released in March and Kilmer's magnificent performance could be all but completely forgotten thanks to the Academy members' shamefully short-term memories.

Though front-runners Nick Nolte and Warren Beatty are commendable in The Prince of Tides and Bugsy, respectively, their performances were, to me, the best of their individual careers but paled against Kilmer's. If a performer's personal best were the Academy yardstick, then actors should be given a special Oscar each time one of their performances outdoes what they've done before.

The Oscars should therefore never be given as pat-on-the-back prizes to those who've simply outdone themselves (Nolte), as pity prizes to those who are ill (Liz Taylor, Butterfield 8), as consolation prizes to elderly actors who've never won (Jessica Tandy, Driving Miss Daisy), to those who deserved but lost the Oscar for another performance (Jessica Lange, who should've won for Frances - NOT for Tootsie) OR as congratulatory/safe-sex prizes to aging playboys who've finally settled down and had their first baby (you know who!). Though it's a difficult and often subjective call, Oscars should be given for the best performance of all performances in a given year. Therefore to choose anyone but Kilmer for this year's Oscar would be nothing short of criminal.

BEST ACTRESS: Ellen Barkin, Switch

Switch did not have a big budget, does not feature super-stars, was not released in December and is not a drama. Therefore the Academy may well miss or perhaps again forget a spectacular performance - Ellen Barkin's amazingly accurate portrayal of a man who is punished for his lothario lifestyle by being 'reincarnated' (sort of) as a man in a woman's body. Or the entire concept may just make male Academy members squirm ...

Barkin is highly underrated in general - she's created many splendid characters in both comedy and drama with little fanfare and a lot of talent. But, specifically, Barkin deserves to be nominated for her role in Switch as it is much more challenging than those enacted by any of her 1991 competitors.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR: Gary Oldman, JFK

Gary Oldman is the most brilliant actor on the face of this planet. In a relatively brief (6 year) film career, he's virtually done it all (and done it splendidly): assorted flawless dialects, original and historic characters, comedy and drama, straight and gay, punk and Shakespeare, intellectuals and clowns. Never false, never forced, always completely and utterly absorbing, Oldman is the quintessential actor's actor.

In JFK, Oldman's recreation of Lee Harvey Oswald is the ONLY thing that makes the 3+ hours worth watching. His character's physical mannerisms and vocal qualities are so accurate that I sometimes found it difficult discerning actual Oswald footage from Oldman's chameleonish performance. Oh, what the heck, just give Oldman all the Oscars and call it a night!

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Mercedes Ruehl, The Fisher King

In a comedically quirky yet perfectly poignant performance, Mercedes Ruehl is utterly charming and convincing as Anne, the bimbo girlfriend of a cold, confused ex-radio shock-jock. Ruehl plays subtext beautifully - beneath Anne's tough and tacky exterior lurks the wisest character of all.

In a particularly memorable scene, Anne's girlish flirtation vanishes in a breathless burst of agonised anger at her maddeningly stoic lover. Ruehl blends her character's opposites seamlessly.

BEST DIRECTOR: Terry Gilliam, The Fisher King

Terry Gilliam is a brave visionary, a film artist as well as director who has made an inspirational film that has no precedent, a unique and memorable cinematic masterpiece. Not only is The Fisher King beautiful to look at and listen to, the casting (with Casting Director Howard Feuer) is absolutely inspired - really, the featured players (Robin Williams, Jeff Bridges, Mercedes Ruehl, Amanda Plummer, Michael Jeter) ALL deserve to be nominated as well.

Furthermore, Gilliam painlessly delivers many a marvellous moral by wrapping said life lessons in a sensually splendid package. The audience never knows what to expect and, perhaps most wonderfully, The Fisher King leaves one with that lofty magical feeling that lingers upon awaking from a wonderfully exotic dream.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: Lawrence & Meg Kasdan, Grand Canyon

Lawrence and Meg Kasdan are the film philosophers of the baby boom generation. Their films' characters become almost secondary in importance; they exist chiefly to deliver the delicious Kasdan dialogue - dialogue that leaps off the screen to warm many a chilly boomer's heart. Virtually anyone could 'watch' a Kasdan film with eyes closed and still enjoy it.

Where The Big Chill encapsulated the concerns of the 1980s, Grand Canyon gently gathers and presents us with our contemporary world gone mad. Yet hope remains, according to the optimistic twosome, as humanity has not lost the ability to find and create miracles out of desperation. The Kasdans cater in literary food for the soul - and Grand Canyon is no exception.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY: Ted Tally, Silence of the Lambs

If you've read a good book, you'll probably be disappointed by the subsequent movie. Not so with Silence of the Lambs, based on the novel by Thomas Harris. Ted Tally's screenplay is deep-down scary and suspenseful, the characters fascinating and complete. No superfluous elements clutter the main plot line which plunges onward to a heart-gripping grand finale and a disquieting ending that leaves us wanting (though dreading) more. Absolutely delicious.

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY: Adrian Biddle, Thelma and Louise

The United Kingdom's Adrian Biddle uses spectacular southwestern U.S. scenery to symbolise not only Thelma and Louise's isolation but the beauty of their friendship and of freedom as well (temporary though the latter may be). The towering golden mountains, hot hazy roads and sparkling desert skies are essential to the mood of the movie while Hollywood's preferred location for 1991, the Grand Canyon, makes a spectacular setting for Thelma and Louise's dramatic finale.

BEST SOUNDTRACK: James Newton Howard, Grand Canyon

Like the film, James Newton Howard's bewitching soundtrack captures life's opposites - a haunting choir of ethereally angelic voices smoothly alternates with a relentless urban-jungle beat. Mystical and powerful, the music sets Grand Canyon's moods quickly and cleanly to assist the flow of the film's rapidly changing scenes. Finally, a majestic American anthem reminiscent of Copeland soars like an eagle into flight.

Howard also composed the music for The Prince of Tides which, though entirely different, is just as memorably beautiful, poignant without ever encroaching into the realm of melodic melodrama.

Beauty and the Beast is heavily favoured to win Oscar but, again, I believe that incidental background soundtrack music should be in a separate category from music written specifically for musicals. More cinematic apples and oranges.

BEST SONG: Glenn Frey, "I'm a Part of You, You're a Part of Me", Thelma and Louise

Ex-Eagle Glenn Frey's ballad is the perfect theme song for the two best-buddy southern-belle rebels. Like the ladies, the melody has a sweet country beat while the lyrics speak eloquently of their forever friendship. Furthermore, Frey's song is the consummate driving ditty that makes you want to put the top down and feel that wind in your hair - just like Thelma and Louise (well, except for the end part ...).

BEST ART DIRECTION: Mel Bourne (Production Designer)/ P. Michael Johnston (Art Director), The Fisher King

Each Fisher King set visually describes its inhabitants with painstaking, fascinating detail ... from Jack's viciously cold and colourless penthouse to Perry's manically colourful urban cave (high to low, frigid to fiery) - whereas Anne lives somewhat gaudily on the second floor above a video store (a cinematic analogy for society's middle class?). Manhattan has never looked lovelier - or more frightening. From Gothic to apocalyptic, magical to murderous, The Fisher King's art direction/ production design is a deliciously unpredictable feast for the eyes.

(b) Top 10 Films of 1991*

Backdraft
The Doctor
The Fisher King
Grand Canyon
Hook
Little Man Tate
Prince of Tides
Silence of the Lambs
Terminator 2: Judgment Day
Thelma and Louise

Sleeper: Late for Dinner

(c) 1991's 10 Biggest Disappointments*

The Addams Family
Black Robe
The Doors
Hudson Hawk
JFK
The Marrying Man
Other People's Money
Scenes From a Mall
Soapdish
V. I. Warshawski

Didn't Expect Much But It Delivered EVEN LESS!: King Ralph

* Alphabetical order. Concert films, documentaries and animated films not included.

As I live in somewhat of a cultural wasteland, I have, as of this writing, to see Fried Green Tomatoes, Life is Sweet, Truly, Madly, Deeply and Hear My Song, as well as most of 1991's foreign films which should get here sometime THIS year. So, if upon seeing any of the aforementioned I change my mind on any of my Best (and possibly Worst) of 1991, I'll let you know!

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['Radek Reviews' welcomes correspondence. Write to either 'The MacGuffin' (address on back page) or direct to Irene Renata Radek, 3 Louisa Drive, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1E 4T4.]

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Book reviews (e.g. 'Cary Grant: The Lonely Heart', 'Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games'); the book and the film: Hitchcock's Suspicion; The Cabinet of Dr Caligari revisited. Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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The Man Who Knew Too Little: Hitchcock's 'The Wrong Man' (1957)

The majority of men are subjective towards themselves and objective towards all others, terribly objective sometimes ...

- Sören Kierkegaard[1]

In the novel 'Our Mutual Friend' by Charles Dickens (1812-70), the principal character is thought to have drowned, after which he goes incognito for a time. It's a peculiar sensation for him. "A spirit that was once a man", he says, "could hardly feel stranger or lonelier, going unrecognised among mankind than I feel." But he sees how "this is the fanciful side of the situation". His life has a "real side" which he determines to face. "I know I evade it, as many men - perhaps most men - do evade thinking their way through their greatest perplexity. I will try to pin myself to mine ..."

The passage is typical later Dickens. What it basically represents, of course, is a ghost's-eye view. Years earlier, in 'A Christmas Carol' (1843), Dickens had used the device of a ghostly watcher to teach his character Scrooge a simple moral lesson: here's what people really think of you, and hadn't you better do something about it? But in the major novels, like 'Bleak House' (1853) and 'Our Mutual Friend' (1865), he put the device to more sophisticated effect. One such effect was to make the people watched themselves seem like spirits - as if it took a ghost to see a ghost.

In turn, notice what that does. It helps turn the central Dickens problem of an intractable self into a universal phenomenon, one where everybody is visibly mortal. (By a "problem of ... self" I mean both a psychological and a moral issue, stemming in Dickens from our imperfect human nature.) In the case of 'Our Mutual Friend', if not all its characters choose to confront their "perplexity", even fewer of them prosper; still, the novel hints how, at a symbolic level, the waters of the Thames are at least potentially healing ...

Mind you, London itself is blighted from the start; in 'Our Mutual Friend' you have dust obscuring whole areas of sky and landscape. Here Dickens took his iconography from William Blake (1757-1827), whose poem 'London' refers to "the chartered Thames" and "Every blackening church".[2] Between them, these two writers created a vision of the metropolis which their successors exploited with varying degrees of effect and skill. For instance, what soon followed were the countless detective tales and 'thrillers' showing a city gripped by the notorious 'London particular' fog; the best of these included Conrad's 'The Secret Agent' (1907), Mrs Belloc Lowndes's 'The Lodger' (1913), Thomas Burke's 'The Hands of Mr Ottermole' (1931), and Margery Allingham's "The Tiger in the Smoke' (1952).

In the cinema, D. W. Griffith's Broken Blossoms (1919) provided an early instance of an adaptation from the same literary stream. The story came from another Thomas Burke title, a collection called 'Limehouse Nights'. (It, in turn, had appropriated its unredeemably brutal character known as 'Battling' Burrows from 'Our Mutual Friend' - whose 'Rogue' Riderhood is a scavenger in the Thames.) Under Griffith's direction, the story's riverside fogs were artfully realised, and the film's performers (Lillian Gish, Richard Barthelmess, Donald Crisp) all helped further convey a sense of ineluctable gloom.

Now, I want for convenience to call the tradition I've just outlined 'English expressionism' or 'English noir'. Alfred Hitchcock was drawn to it from the start, with his adaptation of The Lodger (1926), and further showed that he understood its deeper nuances when he made Frenzy (1972). The latter begins ironically, with views of a cleaned-up Thames. Within minutes, an equally ironic allusion to Wordsworth's 'Prelude' (Book XI - 'Imagination, How Impaired and Restored')[3] sets the director firmly onside with Blake and Dickens. Soon we learn that London is in thrall to a Necktie Murderer, and that the city is "littered" with the corpses of his victims ...

Frenzy is relatively lightweight. But at the height of Hitchcock's career, in America, he'd made The Wrong Man. That film tells the true story of a man's wrongful arrest and his fears for the loss of everything that constitutes his identity: his family, his job, his sanity. Straight away, Hitchcock must have seen how the film's wintry images and downbeat theme could be inflected according to the 'English' model he knew so well - no matter that the setting was New York. Indeed, the parallels with 'traditional' London were there

to be exploited, and Hitchcock promptly set about doing just that. In the event, even the structure of the film followed earlier models, the most important of which is undoubtedly Dickens's 'Bleak House'.[4]

* * *

[Kierkegaard] is the only modern man who has so profound a sense of the solidarity of the race that original sin makes any sense to him.

- Walter Lowrie

Far more than Kafka's 'The Trial' (1925) - which it influenced - 'Bleak House' underpins The Wrong Man in nearly every major respect.[5] (Hitchcock had read the Dickens novel at school.) There's a splendid study by Taylor Stoehr[6] which convincingly argues that at the core of Dickens's art is a sense of wholeness restored, an elaborate and by no means trivial "dream" for the reader to live through and savour. In this, Stoehr's estimation of Dickens's intent hardly differs from Robin Wood's notion of there being a "therapeutic" purpose to Hitchcock's films. I want now to examine The Wrong Man as a 'Dickensian' text - starting with the film's opening scenes.

For a certain kind of imaginative artist, time and space are major raw materials to be worked. Such an artist is Hitchcock, whom we see at the start of The Wrong Man. A shadowy figure, he addresses us across the vastness of a deserted sound stage ("This is Alfred Hitchcock speaking ..."); paradoxically, while he appears distant and diminutive, his voice is close at hand, confiding. It's as if we were being given privileged 'interior' information which transcends the space of its telling. (And which, having been recorded on film, it certainly does.) Appropriately, Hitchcock distinguishes between the present film and his past work: what we are about to see "is a true story, every word of it". Together with the gloomy and deserted set and a musical motif which includes a menacing double-bass, everything here contrives to suggest the essence of expressionism: a man bringing himself to judgment in his own mind.[7] But if Hitchcock quite literally puts himself at the centre of this first scene, that's not the end of it. The double-bass isn't only Hitchcock's instrument (as in Strangers on a Train), it's also that of his principal character, whom we are about to meet. Moreover, the same 'expressionist' stylistics that accompany the film's opening will envelop what follows to the last shot.[8] In effect, we're being told that all the world's a sound stage, and that Hitchcock is both master of ceremonies and, like us, one more participant.

Cut to New York's famous Stork Club - where musician Christopher Emmanuel ('Manny') Balestrero plays in the Latin band. Another master of ceremonies presides here: on the right of screen hovers the Club's maître de ... Likewise, a different double-bass prevails, that of Manny (Henry Fonda). But again things aren't as they first seem. Belying the generally festive connotations (people dancing and dining out beneath bunches of balloons; the band's rumba accompaniment), what the sequence shows via a series of near-invisible dissolves is the Club's patrons being spirited away. It's at once a foretaste of other 'Dickensian' effects to come and a link to the deserted sound stage of the opening. Equally, because the dissolves condense an evening's festivities into a few seconds of screen time, the sequence is a correlative of the first: instead of space being primarily what is transcended, here it's time. As critic William Pechter notes, the effect is positively eerie - and much-facilitated by Bernard Herrmann's reedy modulations of the rumba score.[9]

The foreshadowings multiply. Even the particular lettering of the film's credits in this sequence will be echoed later when Manny and his wife Rose (Vera Miles) visit the office of the attorney Mr O'Connor (Anthony Quayle), i.e. you can see the same style of lettering spelling out the words "Law Office" on the window behind O'Connor's desk. Such 'closure' may be comforting but it also suggests entrapment in someone else's nightmare - in this case, presaging the attorney's eventual inept defence of Manny in court. Again, during the credits sequence Manny's band is heard by the film audience playing continuously, i.e. without sound dissolves matching the visual dissolves: the effect both imposes a 'wholeness' on events that are in flux and suggests some (wilful?) blindness on the part of Manny and his fellow musicians to an insidious reality. Both aspects of the effect anticipate issues in the film. But their near-paradox, which continues the vein of Hitchcock's introduction, is surely aimed at us.

When Manny leaves the Stork Club that night the camera frames him in such a way that he appears to have been arrested by two passing foot patrolmen - but he is oblivious of this, i.e. he doesn't yet see himself

through an outsider's eyes. Also, though he next descends to his customary subway station and boards his usual train,[10] he soon ascends again, i.e. metaphorically and actually, he's unconscious of how he's about to be plunged, like a Dickens character, into murky depths where he'll struggle for his life. And so on - the opening scenes are indeed one long foreshadowing (thus, given the protracted nature of everything that follows, a kind of meta-foreshadowing).

Let's run the film forward to the point of Manny's arrest. Here there's a key sequence in which he's picked up by detectives and taken, after initial interrogation, to visit the places he's alleged to have robbed. Much of the area is familiar to him. As the police car starts out, Manny can see Rose waiting for him at home, unaware of anything wrong. Wherever he looks, people are going about their business. But soon we notice something else about the pinched faces of these passers-by in the wintry streets. Typically, they show the "Marks of weakness, marks of woe" evoked by William Blake's 'London' (compare Dickens's 'grotesques'). On the other hand, I can't agree with critic Donald Spoto that there's anything "suspicious" about them; basically, they express a preoccupation and busy-ness that are just human. And, yes, mortal: caught in car headlights, people hurrying across the road look like wraiths. The scene's 'ghostly onlooker' effect anticipates both Vertigo (adapted from a novel called 'Among the Dead') and the credits sequence of North by Northwest (which is as eerie as that of The Wrong Man).[11]

* * *

The bourgeois mind is really the inability to rise above the absolute reality of time and space, and as such is therefore able to devote itself to the highest objects, e.g., prayer, at certain times and with certain words.

- Sören Kierkegaard

Manny's nickname reminds us that he's just an ordinary man, a capable musician but no genius like the immortal Mozart (whom both Manny's boys, aged 8 and 5, say they wish to emulate). An Italian Catholic, he puts his faith in God and lives his life accordingly. Early in the film, Hitchcock goes to great lengths to establish the Balestrero family's average qualities. At the same time, death-in-life (a favourite Hitchcock theme since The Lodger)[12] already prowls ...

Arriving home from work in the early morning, Manny closes the front door - which the tracking camera 'miraculously' penetrates. Here, and again later, both the camera and the ubiquitous double-bass refuse to be kept out. In one sense, they assert the wholeness, the bigger picture, that Manny simply can't grasp. (If he could, he might have less need of miracles - something for which he and his family later pray.) But in another sense, it's death itself which enters Manny's home. This particular morning, the double-bass sounds as if it were stalking Manny down the hall, in a reprise of the mournful oboe and double-bass motif from the pre-credits sequence. Specifically, that motif functions like Albinoni's famous 'Adagio' as used in both Orson Welles's The Trial and Peter Weir's Gallipoli to suggest fatality (and where the double-bass is singularly expressive). Simultaneously, Hitchcock establishes a context that will mock any attempts by the Balestrero family to deny reality: e.g. when Rose wants to lock all the doors and turn people away.

Inside the house it's still dark and the two boys are asleep. But in the main bedroom Rose is awake and is anxious to talk to her husband. She's been suffering from impacted wisdom teeth, something her dentist has explained in a little lecture he gave her "on evolution". As Rose puts it: "Seems the human race is growing smaller jaws and having fewer teeth, but the teeth are ahead of the jaws ..." (i.e. everything moves so slowly). It's not the only such lecture we hear in the film. After Manny's drawn-out day in court ends as a mis-trial, the judge sententiously tells the jurors about the American system of justice - which has evolved from the famous Code of Hammurabi. "In Babylonian days ..." Against the sort of time-scale evoked by these references, that of Manny's and Rose's lives is modest indeed: e.g. they have enough problems just making month-by-month repayments of money they've borrowed on the instalment plan. The scene in the bedroom ends when Rose says she sometimes feels frightened at night as she waits for Manny's return; and a small bedside clock chimes the hour.

That tinkling sound - so puny compared to the film's omnipresent roar of trains - confirms the various

messages we've been getting. The outer world whirls around the fragile domestic world, threatening to catch it up and crush it. True, Manny can comfort Rose by saying without apparent complacency: "We're in love, we've got two good bright boys, I've got a job I like ..." Nevertheless, their sense of reality (which philosophers would define in terms of a time-space-causality nexus)[13] is not only ordinary, it's blatantly utilitarian and 'bourgeois', i.e. routine and confined. When next afternoon Manny joins his sons beside the piano (note the metronome on top), it isn't surprising to hear him offer this piece of homespun advice: "You musn't let anything throw you off the beat ..."

* * *

The opposite of the bourgeois mentality is really the Quaker religion (in its abstract significance), where it includes the uncertainty and chance which is found in the life of so many; altogether it is an annihilation of the historical process.

- Sören Kierkegaard

What now happens to Manny is played out like a nightmare against a backdrop we've already partly noted, that of New York in the winter of 1952-3.[14] In this nightmare, human need finds itself cut off, as if by a time/space warp, from a support which had always seemed available; now, other people come and go but they appear preoccupied or unheeding. In short, the atmosphere resembles that of 'Bleak House', whose famous opening includes the following passage:

> Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill ... Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, ... adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.

The weather that prevails in the very title of 'Bleak House' is, of course, symbolic, the equivalent of the dust in 'Our Mutual Friend'. That is, the 'problem of self' is evoked on a national, indeed universal, scale - though it's most artfully realised in the localised descriptions of London and its inhabitants, as in this passage. Notably, the passage hints at various forms of combativeness and greed, and the slow if not failed role of evolution in halting human imperfection. Also, it foreshadows the lumbering lawsuit that will take centre-stage in the story and affect many lives, several of them terminally.

Other imagery here is 'generic' in the sense that it recurs as a set of parallels in The Wrong Man: e.g. the tenaciously clinging mud (compare the film's memorable close-up of Manny's soiled hands after his finger-printing), the ill-tempered pedestrians losing their foothold (compare Manny's injunction to his quarrelling sons not to lose "the beat"), the implicit contribution made to the "general infection" by commerce with its "deposits ... accumulating at compound interest" (compare Manny and Rose's struggle to pay back money they've borrowed on the instalment plan). As I've implied, the parallels to be drawn between Hitchcock's film and Dickens's novel are more extensive, and more suggestive, than could be drawn between the film and Kafka's 'The Trial' ...[15]

Now, it's scarcely forcing matters to add that in The Wrong Man there are several 'bleak houses': the precinct station (with its scarred concrete walls), the cheerless tenements, the sanitarium (to which Rose is committed late in the film), the Balestrero house itself (after Rose's departure from it). The early hints of mortality and coming tribulation are just that, hints. But soon they are confirmed, as when Manny goes looking for alibi-winesses and finds that the people have all either died or moved away without trace. Seeking these potential witnesses, Manny and Rose visit parts of the city that are clearly unfamiliar to them; in the same way, characters in 'Bleak House' visit little-known parts of London (e.g. the foul slum called Tom-all-Alone's). Manny and Rose even travel out of the city to an up-state holiday resort where, the previous summer, they had spent happier times; now the resort is under snow and as much in the grip of winter as the city itself - a parallel to how in 'Bleak House' there's little to choose between muddy London and drizzly 'Chesney Wold' in Lincolnshire.[16]

Also, in both works hopes are constantly being quickened, then dashed. Manny strides purposefully across the snow at the resort but achieves nothing definite. Back in the city, he and Rose visit a tenement block and hear animated sounds in the apartment they're seeking, but the giggling young girls who answer the door can't help them. (The two girls, whose parents are not at home, mirror Manny and Rose's two boys - who at this moment are also without their parents' company.) Even Manny's trial begins in hope that the truth will quickly come to light, for he would seem to have one (at any rate) excellent alibi from his dentist, who can testify that his face was visibly swollen on one of the robbery dates; but the proceedings end in anti-climax. In all these instances, one may be reminded of a passage from Chapter 2 of 'Bleak House' (a passage ably analysed by Professor C. B. Cox):

> My Lady Dedlock (who is childless), looking out in the early twilight from her boudoir [at Chesney Wold] at a keeper's lodge, and seeing the light of a fire upon the latticed panes, ... and a child, chased by a woman, running out in the rain to meet the shining figure of a wrapped-up man coming through the gate, has been put quite out of temper. My Lady Dedlock says she has been 'bored to death'.

As Professor Cox's analysis shows, the effect here hinges on the sudden contrast between the generally deathly scene (there's even a paved terrace at Chesney Wold called 'the Ghost's Walk') and the warmth and darting movement across the way.[17] Also, let's note the continuity with other parts of the novel: e.g. with the ill-temper of the Londoners in Chapter 1. By such means, both 'Bleak House' and The Wrong Man exploit their respective closed worlds, to immense cumulative effect.

Again, people and events in The Wrong Man have generally a subdued, underwater quality - more purposeful movements are the exception. But when Manny is arrested and locked up overnight, in effect he survives drowning. As the camera begins to whirl around him in his cell, Herrmann's most 'underwater' music (harp, strings, distant brass and stifled woodwinds) echoes the suggestion of a vortex. For a while Manny finds that his whole conception of time and space, and of values, has shifted. Released on bail, he tells his wife and his in-laws, who put up the money, "I'll never forget this, never." For Rose, he has the special thought, "Oh honey, you'll never know how much I needed you." Perhaps most significantly, as he pauses on their door step where just the previous day the police had accosted him, he says it feels like it happened "about a million years ago".

* * *

> Even if, juristically speaking, we were not accessories to the crime, we are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals. In reality we merely lacked a suitable opportunity to be drawn into the infernal melee. None of us stands outside humanity's black collective shadow. Whether the crime lies many generations back or happens today, it remains the symptom of a disposition that is always and everywhere present ...
>
> - C. G. Jung (1957)

Sadly, Manny never really incorporates the insights his ordeal offers him. His 'bourgeois' viewpoint remains essentially unaltered, restricted in spite of everything by his particular time and place.[18] Then he fails a crucial test. Even so, the director's compassion, especially for a fellow Catholic, allows a final ambiguity ...

Hitchcock called his film's dénouement merely an "ironic coincidence", but one he "liked". (Perhaps for more than aesthetic reasons?) As Manny prays to a religious picture, the real holdup man materialises on screen, to be caught soon afterwards. I think even a viewer who is a non-believer feels the impact of this. For a start, the materialisation of the real criminal reverses a trend: recall the 'dissolving' Stork Club patrons, the dead or vanished witnesses, Rose's breakdown. Manny himself has seemed headed the same way, having just told his mother (Esther Minciotti), "You'd all be better off without me". (Note that dematerialisation is also very much a motif of 'Bleak House', as epitomised in the startling death of a character by 'spontaneous combustion'.)

Also, the episode is constructed and played to suggest a new wholeness. This time, our sense of that

wholeness has less to do with a feat performed by Hitchcock's camera, and more to do with 'an act of God' which the film dutifully presents. After Manny's despairing remark to his mother, she tells him to pray for strength. What we then see is a succession of four 'heads': that of Manny's mother (who prays in an adjoining room), that of the Christ figure in the religious picture, that of Manny, and (after a single most emphatic dissolve) that of the real criminal who will be caught as he tries to rob a delicatessen. This visual 'chain effect' shows us a continuity not yet known to Manny, though he may infer it later. What he may never truly infer are all the other continuities, i.e "ironic coincidences", that have led up to it.

The crucial coincidence, of course, isn't just that Manny has a 'double' but that the latter operates in Manny's neighbourhood and holds up the insurance office where the Balestrero family have opened accounts. (Later, it even turns out that Manny and his double print alike and make an identical spelling mistake.) Actually, the film contains several 'doubles' of Manny and the real criminal, some more 'alike' than others: Manny brushes against one of them (the real criminal?) on the fateful afternoon he visits the insurance office to arrange a loan on Rose's policy.[19] Further, Manny lives in Jackson Heights, an area of Queens,[20] which happens to be where the attorney Mr O'Connor also lives. Yet Mr O'Connor's office is located in the Victor Moore Arcade Building, just up the passageway from the insurance office. This, in a city the size of New York! Again you think of Dickens, of whom his contemporary and biographer John Forster wrote:

> On the coincidences, resemblances and surprises of life Dickens liked especially to dwell, and few things moved his fancy so pleasantly. The world, he would say, was so much smaller than we thought it; we were all so connected by fate without knowing it and people supposed to be far apart were so constantly elbowing each other; and tomorrow bore so close a resemblance to nothing half so much as yesterday.

That's indeed the stuff of both 'Bleak House' and The Wrong Man. In Manny's case, he glimpses a state of consciousness which might encompass it (compare his "million years" remark and his new knowledge of the city), but even the glimpse 'dissolves'. In fact, the arrest of the real criminal seems only to cause Manny more setbacks in the here-and-now:

(1) The first of these is crucial - a test which he fails. When the two men come face to face at the precinct station, Manny's response is to assume the other's absolute guilt, as various people had earlier assumed his own. Manny shows no magnanimity. But, reverting to old form, nor does he show understanding. "Do you realise what you've done to my wife?" he asks peevishly. Which is no doubt human of him, and true-to-life, but also self-denying in a Jungian sense - note that I'm far from calling Manny a saint. And what will happen to this other man's wife and family?

(2) With grim justice, Manny himself encounters non-understanding when he tries to explain events to Rose. As in 'Bleak House', when the seemingly interminable lawsuit ends but leaves behind a trail of devastation and madness (e.g. Lady Dedlock's suicide), so Hitchcock's film contains its own victims. Notably, there's Rose. Blaming her impacted wisdom teeth and her inadequate housekeeping for what has happened, i.e. employing the same weak logic to which Manny is prone, she retreats into catatonia. When Manny comes to the sanitarium to tell her he's been cleared, she only murmurs, "That's fine for you". Here, what looks like a variant on Dickens's 'problem of self'[21] enters another slow stage. Manny admits to a nurse that he'd been "hoping for a miracle", and that his sons pray each night for their mother's recovery. The nurse smiles. Miracles happen, she says, "but they take time".

A final title, placed over a long-shot of a family strolling down a Florida street, tells us that after two years Rose left the sanitarium "completely cured". Yet still a plummeting chord sounds a note of terror. The essential Hitchcockian ambiguity remains.[22] The ordeal of one man and his family may be over, but the deeper-lying problem remains unaddressed. And though the answer may occasionally be glimpsed through what I've called the philosophers' time-space-causality nexus, who among us can really expect to do better than Manny and penetrate to that awesome region of the 'thing-in-itself'?

8. The film's penultimate shot shows a corridor in a sanitarium, where back-lighting duplicates that of the opening scene. The final image is of a Florida street, ostensibly signifying 'release'. But even here, converging footpaths form a wedge-shape which repeats the typical expressionist 'man bringing himself to judgement' motif. Also, as I note in the text, there's an alarming chord on the soundtrack at this point ...

9. Pechter's article - one of several perceptive pieces he wrote on Hitchcock - appeared in 'Commentary' magazine, November 1976. (I thank Freda Freiberg for showing it to me.) By contrast, Marshall Deutelbaum's "Finding the Right Man in The Wrong Man" (printed in his 'Hitchcock Reader', 1986) is often exasperatingly beside-the-point or wrong, as when he says that "the lap dissolves [in this sequence] function in a purely conventional manner".

10. Both the subway station and the train are largely deserted, with the same connotation as before.

11. An essay could be written on the North by Northwest credits sequence. An initial 'ghostly' green, itself a carry-over from Vertigo, dissolves to a view of glass office blocks which eerily reflect home-bound New Yorkers. The effect echoes T. S. Eliot's "Unreal City" passage in his poem 'The Waste Land' (e.g. the lines "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many") - a passage he notes was inspired by two lines from Baudelaire. Equally, though, it seems possible that both Eliot and Hitchcock (here and in Frenzy) were reacting against the typical Wordsworth view of London (e.g. the latter's 'Westminster Bridge', which begins, "Earth has not anything to show more fair"). In view of the many poetry references I keep attributing to Hitchcock, in various issues of 'The MacGuffin', it's worth noting that he was a friend of C. Day Lewis, the English Poet Laureate (1968-72), who wrote crime fiction using the significant pseudonym Nicholas Blake.

12. See 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 3.

13. Hugo Münsterberg anticipated The Wrong Man when he wrote: "The photoplay tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination and emotion." Nevertheless, as I wrote in 'MacGuffin' 2 (p. 4), we can make no ultimate distinction between outer and inner worlds, object and subject. Hence, perhaps, the characteristic Hitchcockian ambiguity ...

14. Hitchcock's film is based, via a treatment by Maxwell Anderson and Angus McPhail, on Herbert Brean's "A Case of Identity" which appeared in 'Life' magazine, 29 June 1953. Brean's article deserves anthologising for its excellent reporting and intrinsic interest.

15. Still, I leave as an open question Mark Spilka's differentiation between Dickens's and Kafka's basic religious assumptions. For Dickens, the unjust social order shown in 'Bleak House' has been generated in part by a false notion of people's natural sinfulness. The fog clinging to the Court of Chancery would disappear if society would accept the fact that God is beneficent, and people naturally good. (Compare Lesley Brill's view of Hitchcock in 'The Hitchcock Romance'.) Kafka, on the other hand, accepts the notion of a distant, inscrutable God, apparently unjust, who condemns all of us to a state of "sinful innocence". (This is closer to my own 'Schopenhauerian' view of Hitchcock.)

16. Compare note 4.

17. Professor Cox's "A Dickens Landscape" appeared originally in 'The Critical Quarterly', Spring 1960.

18. Jung's 'The Undiscovered Self', quoted at the head of this section and again later, was published in America just as The Wrong Man appeared. Both works reflect, in their respective subjects, some Cold War attitudes then prevailing en masse. Fittingly, Patrick Humphries' 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' quotes noted critic Colin McArthur: "the film which perhaps best conveys the underlying unease of 50s America is The Wrong Man".

19. Marshall Deutelbaum's article (see note 9) says that "the real thief is often visible in the film as he and Balestrero cross paths". But Deutelbaum fails to distinguish between actual look-alikes and people who

* * *

The perfect has no need of the other, but weakness has, for it seeks support and does not confront its partner with anything that might force him into an inferior position and even humiliate him. This humiliation may happen only too easily when idealism plays too prominent a role.

- C. G. Jung

To cite such an (arguably) God-like entity as Kant's 'thing-in-itself' is to raise the question: should any of us even want to presume knowledge of it? At any rate, that's a Hitchcock theme whose fullest exploration occurs in his next film, Vertigo. You might call the theme the 'tragic pursuit of perfection'. In Hitchcock, it's invariably linked to a character's sudden realisation of just how precarious his life is. That in turn may suggest a crucial link to the nightmare world of The Wrong Man.

Now, a coda. For the element of nightmare there's a further 'English' precedent, of which Hitchcock was undoubtedly aware.[23] I'm thinking of what is still probably the world's most famous case of mistaken identity, that of one Alfred Beck. In 1896 Beck was arrested in a London street on the say-so evidence of a woman who claimed he'd previously swindled her of money and jewellery. On being 'identified' by several witnesses, including two policemen, he was found guilty and spent five years in prison. Three years later, in practically identical circumstances, he was arrested again! Once more he was found guilty. This time he was awaiting sentence when the police learned of the arrest of another man who'd been using what sounded to them like a familiar technique. One of them visited the man and immediately saw his resemblance to Beck. It turned out the man had committed all the swindles ...

Thus the Beck case may have given Hitchcock the idea he used in The Wrong Man of a detective's sudden chance realisation of Manny's innocence - a scene which effectively completes the earlier 'four heads' sequence. Need I add how the ambiguous emphasis on chance fits the film's evocation of our everyday world, in which both mundane and extraordinary forces operate largely unseen?

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Notes

1. The present article will refer to works by Dickens and Kafka. The great Danish thinker Kierkegaard (1813-55) has been studied by scholars of both novelists. I've found him particularly illuminating of Hitchcock's films Shadow of a Doubt (1943) and The Wrong Man.

2. Camille Paglia's comments on Blake's poem in her book 'Sexual Personae' (1990) are relevant. She writes: "Blake prefigures Baudelaire and Kafka in his vision of the dead night-world of the modern city, today an arid grid of glass and concrete." Paglia, whose book has perceptive things to say on both Dickens and Hitchcock, might further have cited those artists in the context of her remarks on Blake. See also note 11.

3. For my thoughts on the zealous Wordsworth (1770-1850), see note 11.

4. The pioneering article on Dickens and Hitchcock, which is excellent, is Edward Buscombe's "Dickens and Hitchcock" in 'Screen', Volume 11, Issue 4-5 (July-October, 1970). One of Buscombe's main points concerns the notion of a 'desecrated Eden' in both artists' work.

5. For Dickens's influence on Kafka, and a comparison of 'Bleak House' and 'The Trial', see Mark Spilka, 'Dickens and Kafka' (1963).

6. Taylor Stoehr, 'Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance' (1965).

7. I owe this definition to Dr Margery Morgan who gave it in a lecture delivered at Monash University on aspects of German Expressionism.

are merely similarly dressed. In Hitchcock's The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) we see a woman, dressed like Doris Day in a grey suit, arriving at the Albert Hall: this is presumably Hitchcock's way of telling us that Day, despite not being formally attired for the symphony concert, would have been admitted by the Hall doorman. For the record, in The Wrong Man I think that the man who bumps into Manny in the Victor Moore Arcade is the real criminal, but that other men seen in the street are merely wearing a similar style of overcoat.

20. Queens is where another Italian-American, and an admirer of The Wrong Man, Martin Scorsese, lived as a boy. Scorsese's Cape Fear (1991) deals with the breakdown of a family under pressure in ways that offer parallels to Hitchcock's film. See also note 22.

21. Dickens's 'problem of self' is partly one of characters' inability to change. 'Our Mutual Friend' explores that theme most fully. But if one seeks parallels for Rose's condition as seen in The Wrong Man, perhaps the Dickens characters who come most readily to mind are Mrs Clenham ('Little Dorrit') and Miss Havisham ('Great Expectations').

22. The 1992 edition of Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' reports (p. 257n.) that the film's final shot was added by the studio "over Hitchcock's loud objections". Spoto adds: "In fact the Balestreros never recovered from the lived nightmare ..." Such an outcome is in line with, for example, Australia's real-life 'dingo baby' case, filmed by Fred Schepisi as A Cry in the Dark (1988), where Lindy and Michael Chamberlain were divorced soon after their ordeal. Still, Hitchcock's film was accurate in reporting Rose Balestrero's release after two years spent in a sanitarium (whether or not she was "completely cured"): see "Court Turned Into a Movie Set", 'New York Times', 9 April 1956.

23. This article has concentrated on 'English' aspects of The Wrong Man. Even so, I've omitted to mention the likely influence of some of John Galsworthy's social dramas, especially 'Justice' (1910). I've had to leave out entirely the influence of Maxwell Anderson ('Winterset'), who worked on the screenplay, and of several American plays such as 'Death of a Salesman' (1949) and 'Marty' (1954). For comparison of Henry Fonda's roles in films for Fritz Lang and John Brahm, see Michael Kerbel, 'Henry Fonda' (1975).

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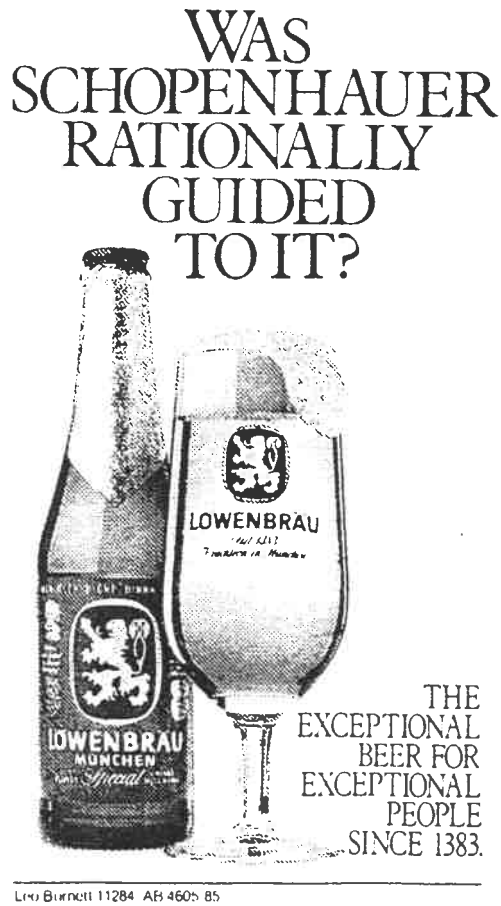

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BACK-ISSUES are available for $5 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy overseas, $3 per copy within Australia.

'MacGuffin' 1 included articles on Hitchcock's Vertigo, plus an account of the director making Family Plot.

'MacGuffin' 2 included articles on Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange and Hitchcock's Stage Fright.

'MacGuffin' 3 included articles on Asian Cinema, 'The Hitchcock Romance' and Hitchcock's The Lodger.

'MacGuffin' 4 included a long article on Hitchcock's Psycho.

'MacGuffin' 5 included an article on Hitchcock's No. 17 and a table of contents for issues 1-4.

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ODD SPOT: RACING AROUND (AND ACROSS)

A question for those who like to play "That reminds me of ..."-type games. What is the connection between Hitchcock's The Birds (1963) and Hugh Hudson's Chariots of Fire (1981)?

Answer: possibly none - but consider the following. Hitchcock's film contains a scene in which Rod Taylor and 'Tippi' Hedren race each other across a bay - he by driving around the perimeter in a sports car, she by taking the direct route in a motor boat. It's clear the scene afterwards influenced Peter Weir's Gallipoli (1981), where two young men race each other across the Australian outback, one on foot and the other on horseback. (The rider is required to refrain from taking shortcuts.)

Well, Hugh Hudson's film seems to pick up on Weir's. Near the start, one of its young men shows promise in athletics. Coming to Cambridge, he accepts a challenge to race against his college clock, which chimes the hour in a certain space of time. And, in fact, the young man succeeds in running around the college quadrangle before the clock stops chiming - the first person ever to do it.

Of course, if Weir's film, and indirectly Hitchcock's, didn't influence Hudson's, that leaves unexplained why the two 1981 films resemble each other in so many other ways. Answers, anyone?

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 7 May-August, 1992 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £3

EDITORIAL

It's good to be back ... though with apologies to everyone for skipping a publication date. That's the privilege of a 'little magazine', I guess.

I thought our last issue had at least one thing going for it: the exactness of its references to particular films. As befits a newsletter, it didn't waffle!

Regarding this issue, I trust it meets the approval of Hitchcock enthusiasts especially. The main item is an analysis of Hitchcock and Cary Grant's first film together, **Suspicion** (1941). The article draws on one or two orthodox Freudian notions (e.g. of a death instinct) to reach some unlikely conclusions. Also, it suggests how the film is linked to the later **Vertigo** (1958) and **Psycho** (1960).

Reviewed in this issue is the book 'Cary Grant: the Lonely Heart'. Reading it, I sensed **Suspicion** might be telling more about Grant than audiences have thought. The book shows him to have been a mercurial yet perhaps rather shallow person. By the same token, the film incorporates some of co-star Joan Fontaine's own personal difficulties of the time. We're told that she was "suffering from an unsatisfactory marriage to Brian Aherne" and that "Hitchcock knew exactly how to use her nervousness and anxiety".

And speaking of a death instinct, I note the recent release of Paul Verhoeven's **Basic Instinct**. A newspaper review by one of our readers, Tom Ryan, calls it "a compelling depiction of the dark side of the male psyche" and mentions its explicit references to **Vertigo** - "but its knowingly over-the-top melodramatic style replaces that film's doomed romanticism with a hard-edged cynicism". Tom refers to the "brouhaha" that surrounded the film's release in America; for a caustic comment about that, see Irene Radek's column in this issue.

Two other books are reviewed this time: the stimulating 'Find the Director and other Hitchcock Games' and the splendid 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**'.

As for our next issue, it's scheduled for November. I've got some work to do meanwhile (writing about novelist Edith Wharton, whose 'The Age of Innocence' and 'Ethan Frome' are both in the film pipeline - see 'News'), so I can't promise to be punctual. But I'll try.

To everyone, good viewing.

Tom

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MESSAGE OF THE QUARTER: THOUGH 'THE MACGUFFIN' APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME LARGELY JUST A FORUM FOR HITCHCOCK ENTHUSIASTS AND SCHOLARS, IN THEORY IT WILL PRINT ANY INTERESTING MATERIAL ON FILMS - CONTRIBUTIONS, FORMAL OR INFORMAL, ARE INVITED ...

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LETTERS

Jennifer Winham, StKilda, Victoria, Australia.

I think my favourite Hitchcock is **Rebecca**; but I may be biased by the fact that I have enjoyed all Daphne du Maurier's books, and also by how, when I was a child, 'Jane Eyre' was compulsory reading.

(Editor's note. I think a lot of the film's fans share your identical bias, Jennifer! I've liked the novels 'Rebecca' and 'My Cousin Rachel' particularly - though I quickly gave up on the later 'The House on the Strand'. Anyway, a rather belated welcome to our SIG.)

* * *

Bill Routt, Division of Cinema Studies, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, Australia.

Here's how Hitchcock is studied at La Trobe.

In 1993 Barbara Creed will be introducing a second year Cinema Studies subject on "Auteurism and Cinema", which will focus on Hitchcock. Hitchcock's films are often used in Barbara's subjects, which include "The Horror Film", "Feminist Film Theory", "Surrealism and Cinema" and "Psychoanalysis and the Cinema" as well as the above.

The two versions of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** as well as **Psycho** and **Marnie** are often featured in the first year "Introduction to Cinema Studies" subject.

There are no other subjects where one may be **certain** of finding the familiar profile, but quite a few where Hitchcock's work has made an appearance at one time or other. (I showed **Sabotage** in last year's "History of Sound Film" subject, **Shadow of a Doubt** has been used for "Close Analysis", etc, etc.) He is always lurking in the corridors somewhere.

Four staff members (Barbara, Chris Berry, Rick Thompson and I) are currently collaborating on a project to develop computer software for the analysis of films on laser disc, and our specimen film is **North by Northwest**. We will each develop a module around a topic related to the film, and the software will contain text and the ability to run extracts from the film to illustrate the points made. Barbara will be dealing with gender, Chris with ethnicity (an interesting, "invisible" component of that film), Rick with narrative, and I with authorship. Meanwhile, the Australian Film, Theatre and Radio School is working on more "production related" analyses, and firming up worldwide distribution deals for what we hope will be a joint venture.

Barbara's forthcoming book on the horror film will probably contain a chapter on **Psycho**, a chapter which will be the first full-scale discussion of the figure of the mother in that film.

* * *

Professor Lee Poague, Department of English, Iowa State University, Ames, USA.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to 'The MacGuffin'.

I teach film in an English department, as part of what is becoming a "cultural studies" major. We have two "revolving subject matter" film courses, one at the junior level, though for most students it is their first film course, and a senior level seminar. I often team teach the junior course with Loring Silet; we tend to shift focus from one term to the next among auteurs, genres, and periods or movements. Hitchcock is often on the agenda (about once every five semesters); and a number of genres of current interest, especially noir and melodrama, encourage us to screen appropriate Hitchcock films even when he is not a special focus of attention. For that matter, we often use Bordwell and Thompson's 'Film Art' as a text, so will often show **North by Northwest** as instancing "The Classical Hollywood Narrative". I hope the near future will see me teaching a graduate class on "Hitchcock and the Philosophy of Criticism". I plan to use Bordwell's 'Making Meaning' to stage a conversation among Robin Wood, Raymond Bellour, Bill Rothman, and Tania Modleski.

(Editor's note. Many thanks to both Professor Poague and Bill Routt for responding to our call for information on how Hitchcock is being taught in academia - new readers might like to check out similar letters in the last issue. And how about that roll-call of some of the world's top Hitchcock experts at the end of Professor Poague's letter? I'm almost knocked out by it! Is there the slightest chance, I wonder, of our readers getting a précis of the resultant proceedings?

Mind you, I hope Professor Poague has a sense of humour! The joke was on him and Donald Spoto recently - see 'Odd Spot' in this issue.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

The plot quickens

Fifty years ago there was George Polti's book 'The Thirty-six Dramatic Situations' where playwrights and scriptwriters could find 'instant' plots and subplots. The computer age brought such further aids for scriptwriters as 'Movie Master', which the Hollywood 'Writers Guild Journal' described in the 1980s as "a first-rate program for writing screenplays, sitcoms and stage plays".

Recently two more programs have been marketed in Britain to assist in script-related tasks like attaching a subplot to the main plot. One is 'Plots Unlimited' at £240 or $555 Australian, the other is 'Collaborator' (a good deal cheaper). Both are reported to give value for money and to be a real help in tying loose ends.

Ironically, the same Hollywood Writers Guild that endorsed the earlier products now wants the new programs banned because they are putting some writers out of work ...

The Leopold and Loeb case filmed again

Quality low-budget films continue to be made, with or without computer assistance (see above). An instance is writer/director Tom Kallin's **Swoon**, which won the Critics Prize at Berlin this year. Its "seductive" account explores the interior world of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, the notorious young Chicago murderers whose 1924 case inspired both Hitchcock's **Rope** (1948) and Richard Fleischer's **Compulsion** (1959).

Meanwhile, the famous defence attorney in that case, Clarence Darrow, has become the subject of a TV movie, **Darrow**, directed by John David Coles. Actor Kevin Spacey portrays Darrow as a man of compassion and every inch a pessimist. The Leopold-Loeb segment of the film begins with Darrow's words: "A true pessimist like myself knows that life is futile and his fellow-men are cruel, so that he expects very little and is seldom disappointed ..."

Strictly fun

Far from pessimistic - at any rate in the eyes of audiences - is the Australian 'David and Goliath' movie, **Strictly Ballroom**, made by first-time director Baz Luhrmann. Its ironic subject is backroom bickering in the dance world, and it features Sydney Dance Company lead Paul Mercurio. The film received a standing ovation at Cannes, where it won the Prix de la Jeunesse; and its 'feel good' message made it easily the most popular work with audiences at both the Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals recently.

Soon to be published

Scarecrow Press in America have announced two forthcoming books on Hitchcock. The first, due out in paperback in September, is called 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality: His 50-Year Obsession with Jack the Ripper and the Superbitch Prostitute - A Psychoanalytic View' by Theodore Price. (The hardcover edition is already available, though it costs a rather forbidding $100 Australian.) Coming later is 'The Soul in Suspense: Catholic/Jesuit Influences on Hitchcock' by Fr Neil P. Hurley.

Over the water, the British Film Institute has launched a series of 360 monographs about films. First title is 'The Wizard of Oz' by novelist-in-hiding Salman Rushdie.

Soon to be screened

Screen adaptations of classic literary works keep appearing. Anthony Hopkins is in two of them: Francis Ford Coppola's **Dracula**, taken from the 1897 horror story by Bram Stoker, and **The Trial**, adapted by Harold Pinter from the 1925 novel by Franz Kafka. Coppola is also updating Walt Disney's **Pinocchio**, with puppets rather than animation; the 1881 story was written by Carlo Collodi.

All the above are effectively re-makes of earlier adaptations. So, too, are a Latin-American co-production of **Oedipus Rex**, scripted by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, no less, and actor-director Bob Hoskins's adaptation of Joseph Conrad's 1907 'The Secret Agent', previously filmed by Hitchcock as **Sabotage**; it stars Gerard Depardieu. (Meanwhile the BBC is making yet another version.)

A version of Albert Camus's 1947 'The Plague', starring William Hurt, is currently in post-production. And Tim Burton (**Batman 2**) is filming the melodrama-cum-stage musical 'Sweeney Todd', about the infamous demon barber.

Lovers of American literature will soon have a chance to see Henry James's 1881 'The Portrait of a Lady' as filmed by the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala team for Warners. Also, at least two adaptations of stories by James's friend, Edith Wharton, are scheduled: Martin Scorsese's **The Age of Innocence**, from the sardonic 1920 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel set in New York and Europe, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Daniel Day-Lewis and Winona Ryder; and **Ethan Frome**, the stark 1911 New England tragedy, which has been filmed for the big screen by the Public Broadcasting System, starring Liam Neeson.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Leitch, Thomas M.: 'Find the Director and other Hitchcock Games' (University of Georgia Press, 1991);
Higham, Charles, and Moseley, Roy: 'Cary Grant: The Lonely Heart' (New English Library, 1990);
Rebello, Stephen: 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (Harper Perennial, 1991) - all in paperback.

It serves me right! I once read the English translation of Roger Caillois's 'Man, Play and Games', and promptly noted how it classified games into just four categories: **agôn** (competition), **alea** (chance), **mimicry** (simulation) and **ilinx** (vertigo). Here, I told myself, was a taxonomy which avoided your hackneyed Freudianism yet might perhaps be used to analyse Hitchcock's films! Then I filed the idea "for future use". Well, Professor Leitch went further! His recent book subjects most of Hitchcock's 50-odd films to close 'ludic' (games-related) scrutiny. And I see that his introductory chapter cites just two main theoretical texts: Caillois's book (1961) and Johan Huizinga's even better-known 'Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture' (1950).

Leitch distinguishes between Caillois's view of games which he calls "functional" and Huizinga's more 'Nietzschean' outlook which maintains "that culture itself is a game from which other games must periodically rescue" us (p. 265). He suggests that while both viewpoints inform Hitchcock's movies,

> The ludic tendencies towards institutional recuperation [validation] and radical critique do not simply alternate in Hitchcock's films; they reinforce each other dialectically, both running in films like **Blackmail** and **Notorious** and **Vertigo** at full throttle. (p. 264)

Actually, Freud isn't far removed from what Leitch is driving at here. He has just invoked Gregory Bateson's analysis of play, which uses specifically Freudian terminology: primary-process thinking (unconscious reactions to given stimuli) and secondary-process thinking (the kind of self-awareness associated with ego formation). Leitch holds that a Hitchcock film requires the audience to assume a position both inside and outside the frame of primary-process thinking.

For example, Hitchcock encourages his audience to enjoy itself trying to 'spot the director' and guessing what story rules apply; then, when the characters also start playing games, such as tennis in **Easy Virtue** (1927), **Rebecca** (1940) and **Strangers on a Train** (1951), he invariably turns these into metaphors which shift the film's tone towards reflexivity ...

Leitch further draws on Bateson in suggesting that Hitchcock's 'play' resembles that of kittens or otters, i.e. its character isn't pre-defined but tends to evolve as it goes along. (I'd guess that many of Luis Bunuel's films function similarly.) Earlier, he'd made an important point, related to the above, about how after every few films Hitchcock would introduce a new item into his games repertoire. A typical example: the 'odd man out' game which Leitch says started at the time of the Daphne du Maurier adaptations, **Jamaica Inn** (1939) and **Rebecca**, with their emphasis on homelessness.[1]

Still, the book isn't totally satisfying. For one thing, the bulk of the unifying insights I've just mentioned turn up only at the end. Whatever rigorous examination of the films in terms of games theory, and the like, that initially seemed promised, isn't delivered. And, despite my jest about "hackneyed Freudianism", I find it excessive that Leitch never cites either Freud **or** Lacan unless someone else (e.g. Bateson) does it for him. The omission of all reference to 'Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious', and all but a short footnote on 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', means that a thrust that should (in my view) have been at the core of the book is marginalised.

Perhaps Leitch didn't want to burden the reader with jargon. In which case, why did he include the introductory chapter at all? It's easily the driest - and weakest - in the book. Almost his only use of Caillois comes when he makes the following point:

> No matter how familiar they are with the rules of his games, Hitchcock's audiences spend a great deal of time as if falling through his films because he keeps changing the rules, and indeed because the rules themselves - the rules of the Hitchcock thriller - stipulate an irreducible combination of controlled competition [audience versus director?], identification, and vertiginous surprise. (pp. 17-18)

Hardly profound. Mind you, Leitch says in his own defence that "Caillois's terminology provides an inadequate model for analysing Hitchcock's films". There's something in that. Hitchcock's audiences are often more self-conscious about their pleasure, and **pleasurably** so, than Caillois's model can accommodate.

Another text not mentioned by Leitch is Eric Berne's bestselling 'Games People Play', subtitled 'The Psychology of Human Relationships'. That book appeared in the same year as **Marnie** (1964); coincidentally or not, the Hitchcock film seems at times to provide a veritable exemplar of such games as 'Frigid Woman' and 'Rapo'. Moreover, the film's climax clearly represents an attempt by the two main characters to attain what Berne calls "game-free living". (Compare Van Damm's line in **North by Northwest**: "Games? Must we?") Given Leitch's seeming aversion to psychology, I doubt it's coincidental that I found his comments on **Marnie** to be among his most superficial ...

Certainly he never discusses that film's recurring, and repetitious, skipping game. As a likely metaphor for Marnie's repeated stealing - and her **skipping** with the proceeds! - it may not have been germane to his purpose, but it surely should have been. (He should also, I think, have consulted the well-known 'Lore and Language of Schoolchildren'[2] on how the game's rhyme about "the lady with the alligator purse" connotes emancipation from a fear of death.) Nor does Leitch discuss related children's games and rhymes in **The**

Birds (1963) and **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943). Further, even the moment in the latter film when we see Hitchcock on the train, "holding the world's best bridge hand", receives only a passing mention for being one of the director's memorable 'cameos' - Leitch makes no attempt to relate this to other scenes with playing-cards in Hitchcock movies (e.g. **Spellbound**, **Lifeboat**) or to a wider symbolism (e.g. expressionism).

So, apart from theory, what **does** the book offer? The short answer is that it provides a very useful survey of the films - for all that its author seems unaware of his employing key terminology from texts like Berne's. Memorably, he interprets **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934) using the Child/Parent/Adult distinction which is at the heart of Berne's 'transactional analysis' of games:

> In posing as figures of parental authority, Hitchcock's characters, including Betty Lawrence's literal parents, are most decisively revealed as children ... In trying to suppress Betty's childishness, the Lawrences deny the children in themselves, children who will necessarily be instrumental in foiling the villains. (pp. 82-3)

Of course, there's again more than a touch of Freud here - proof, no doubt, of how Leitch is a learned fellow even if he's not always thorough with his references.

Still, he's very thorough when recounting the many witticisms of **The Man Who Knew Too Much**, which he calls "Hitchcock's pivotal achievement of the thirties and the most subversive movie he ever made" (p. 84). And that assessment of the film - which may tell you as much about Leitch as about Hitchcock - earns him full marks for assertiveness, at any rate. It's for just such fresh appraisals that you may most want to read the book.

I'm particularly grateful for one of Leitch's comments on **Under Capricorn** (1949). When he declares that "Charles Adare's interest in Lady Henrietta Flusky is mostly non-amatory" (p. 152), his reading effectively opposes Lesley Brill's in 'The Hitchcock Romance' (1988). There, we're told that Adare's "wish to help Hattie becomes indistinguishable from his unholy desire to pry her away from Flusky". Leitch gives me back the Adare I thought I knew, someone akin to the ne'er-do-well, but finally self-abnegating, Sydney Carton in Dickens's novel 'A Tale of Two Cities'.[3] That is, I think the truth about Adare is that early in his relations with Hattie he (more or less) knowingly subdues his **amour** to his intention to rehabilitate her - albeit not without consequent tensions throughout the Flusky household ...[4]

Finally, here's one of the book's outright errors. Leitch seems to think (p. 3) that Hitchcock makes his cameo appearance in **Rope** (1948) by momentarily doubling for actor Cedric Hardwicke in the background of a shot. That's nonsense. Hitchcock turns up in **Rope** as a red neon sign (!) on a distant building: the original, in fact, of the profile-caricature that became so familiar to viewers of Hitchcock's TV shows of the '50s and '60s. (For a colour photograph of the **Rope** set which clearly shows the sign in question, see Patrick Humphries's 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock', p. 113.)

* * *

In hindsight, an obvious contender to have written 'Cary Grant: The Lonely Heart' is Donald Spoto, a perceptive biographer not loathe to make juicy revelations about his show business subjects. But in the event, Charles Higham and Roy Moseley have done an excellent, responsible job. Among their revelations: that Grant was bisexual and that he spied for England during World War II.

A word about these two collaborators. Higham, a British-born poet and film critic, was once literary editor of Australia's 'Bulletin' magazine; his publications include 'Hollywood in the Forties' and several bestselling biographies. As for Moseley, who's perhaps best known for his book 'A Life With the Stars', his colleague claims that he's "a genius with people, [at] getting them to talk and confide in him". Both men met with Grant on several occasions.

Perhaps their book's single most admirable quality is its informed, fair-minded approach. Take two of its several references to director Leo McCarey. During the making of **The Awful Truth** (1937), McCarey would arrive on the set each day with a hangover and no shooting script. The result was a succession of script improvisations which at first threw cast and crew into confusion. But Grant was particularly quick to

adjust. Moreover, as Higham and Moseley note, in the long run the film's free-wheeling established an important precedent for how a creative filmmaker might defy the prevailing studio system. So that's McCarey as hero.

Five years later, he and Grant collaborated again, this time on an anti-Nazi adventure story set in Europe, **Once Upon a Honeymoon** (1942). Somehow the picture retained a disastrous sequence showing an American honeymoon couple (Cary and Ginger Rogers) posing as Jews in order to get into a concentration camp. As Higham and Moseley write:

> How Cary could have lent his name to such a scene is beyond comprehension. It was oafish, vulgar and stupid, and reflected Leo McCarey's incipient anti-Semitism and total failure to understand the real purpose of World War II. (p. 171)

That's McCarey as villain.

Through no fault of the authors, you're likely to come away from their account of Grant's wartime activities feeling confused. On the one hand, you can read of occasions like the **Once Upon a Honeymoon** fiasco and about Cary's friendship with society hostess Countess Dorothy di Frasso - who must be the model for Mrs Van Sutton in Hitchcock's **Saboteur** (1942) - who ran a pro-fascist movement out of her house and gave parties for gangsters like 'Bugsy' Siegel and film stars including Gary Cooper. On the other hand, you can read how Cary had learned that his mother back in Bristol, England, had been Jewish (and either died in childbirth or disappeared), and how he was a brave wartime agent who served his country in both America and Europe.

Mind you, no one doubts that Grant always felt his roots to be in England, where he'd gone on the stage when he was six. Hence his profound satisfaction when he played the Cockney Ernie Mott in Clifford Odets's **None But the Lonely Heart** (1944), a film which Higham and Moseley see as providing the "finest moment on the screen" for both Cary and actress Ethel Barrymore. The scene in question is the one where Ernie's mother dies in prison:

> Neither performer would ever match that moment of transcendent beauty and terror. It was cathartic and shattering, and Odets' direction had a sensitivity and delicacy virtually unmatched in American cinema. (p. 202)

I saw the film recently. The prison scene is indeed moving. Unfortunately, despite a superb East End set, and music by Hans Eisler which at times anticipates his score for Resnais's **Night and Fog** (1955), the picture overall is fairly static.

Grant's being English helps account for his striking up an immediate friendship with the Hitchcocks from the time they first met in New York in 1937. Hitchcock fans will find much to relish in the book. Some items are of a 'Did you know?' kind, like the fact that in **To Catch a Thief** (1955) you can glimpse the Monaco royal palace in the background of a shot of Cary with Grace Kelly (later Princess Grace), or the information that for the Grand Corniche scene in that film Kelly's reckless driving twice nearly carried her and her co-star over the edge. (In 1982 the Princess did indeed die at the wheel of her car when it plunged over a cliff.)

Other items illuminate Hitchcock's creative wit. Some of these are straightforward, as when the director reveals that it was the frequent culinary mishaps of Grant's third wife, actress Betsy Drake, which were satirised in **Frenzy** (1972). And some items definitely require you to draw inferences. As I've said, the book depicts Cary as a wartime hero, his duties including cracking safes in Europe. (Which is surely one reason why Hitchcock chose him to play the retired cat burglar in **To Catch a Thief**.) One day a curious episode occurred just as he was due to secretly fly out of the US. He found himself arrested in a department store for an incident with a young man in the store's public toilet. Somewhere between the store and the police precinct, a signal from headquarters to the radio patrol car caused it to divert course to a certain address. There, Cary was dropped off and another actor - well paid for his trouble - substituted, before later being released. Higham and Moseley note that an almost identical episode happened to billionaire Howard Hughes - one of Cary's former lovers and a lifetime friend - nine years later. The question is, was Hitchcock satirising either one or both of these incidents when in **North by Northwest**

(1959) two police officers who've arrested Thornhill/Kaplan (Grant) are suddenly ordered to detour to the airport and hand over their prisoner to the CIA? My guess is: yes, definitely.

One of Grant's former secretaries has commented, perhaps ungenerously, on his various weaknesses: "It would appear that [his] bisexuality took the form of alternate preferences. One period of his life it would be men, then he would be heterosexual for several years. I often wondered if he was capable of real, genuine feelings, so obsessed was he with his own public image." Typically playing fair, Higham and Moseley cite examples of how Cary himself could be generous when he chose to be (and notoriously stingy at other times); and they suggest what is surely only the truth, that anyway his film performances show how the actor in him had a timeless grace. Those performances will never date ...

* * *

Alfred Hitchcock, too, sometimes proved an enigmatic figure, partly due to his toad-like appearance. But Stephen Rebello's remarkable book about **Psycho** helps set the record straight on that score - and a great many others. It quotes wardrobe mistress Rita Riggs on how she always thought of the director "as the prince locked in the frog". Hitchcock, she says, loved beauty

> and set out to create it. I think his perversities and his frustration with his exterior were part of his wonderful creativity. Everyone talks about his pranksterism and practical jokes, but he had a sense of fun about him that I don't think some people picked up on. For instance, one night I came home to find a carton of wild, French strawberries on my doorstep because we had been talking about them recently. Is that perversity or is that doing something out of sheer enjoyment? (p. 99)

Like **Psycho** itself, Rebello's book is told with a keen sense of "fun". It's richly detailed and never just trivial - though it contains much material of the kind beloved by trivia-collectors (e.g. the names of at least six people, male and female, who got to play 'Mrs Bates', either on the screen or the soundtrack or during rehearsal ...). About as well as any **critical** text could, it shows why **Psycho** may be a masterpiece. The entire production process is explored, from deep background (e.g. concerning the real-life killer Ed Gein) through the scripting and shooting periods to the film's publicity and release, extending to what Rebello calls "afterglow and aftermath" (e.g. Hitchcock's intensive search for subsequent projects).

Nor is Rebello himself without critical acumen, for he sees well enough what was wrong with a meandering early draft of the screenplay, and he can describe Saul Bass's titles as being "In the style of a Rorschach ... simultaneously [suggesting] prison bars, city buildings, and sound waves".[5] In short, he has written a book which is almost as entertaining and as gutsy (!) as the very film it honours. The only other immediate comparison I can think of is with Raymond Durgnat's celebrated essay, "Inside Mrs Bates".

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Notes

1. Thinking about this example, I see that Leitch has got it wrong. 'Homelessness' is a trait of many central characters in Hitchcock from the eponymous lodger in the 1926 film to the heroes and heroines of several of the '30s comedy-thrillers. Thereafter, similar characters turn up constantly.

2. I. and P. Opie, 'The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren' (1959).

3. 'A Tale of Two Cities' was one of several Dickens novels Hitchcock read as a boy. (Others were 'Bleak House', 'Great Expectations' and 'Our Mutual Friend' - see D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock', pp. 28, 422.) In it, Sydney Carton admires the pretty Lucie Manette but knows that he can never press on her a claim for marriage; she marries Charles Darnay. Carton then becomes a good friend of the family. The Oedipal implications of this are obvious. They extend to Carton's ultimate moment of self-abnegation when he goes to the guillotine to save Darnay, a former French aristocrat who had renounced his title and fled abroad ... Given the structural opposition in **Under Capricorn** between Sydney, Australia, and Dublin, Ireland, Hitchcock's film might itself have been called **A Tale of Two Cities**. But the parallels between

Dickens's novel and Hitchcock's film extend to various suggestive details. For one, consider the film's reference to a trade in shrunken heads, first mooted in a street outside a bank, and how the novel has a character named Jerry Cruncher who works as a bank messenger by day, as a grave-robber by night ...

4. Adare seems genuinely surprised when the housekeeper Milly takes offence when she finds him alone with Hattie in the latter's bedroom.

5. But Rebello misses one thing I consider most important, the virtual analogue of the titles-sequence to what Schopenhauer called Will!

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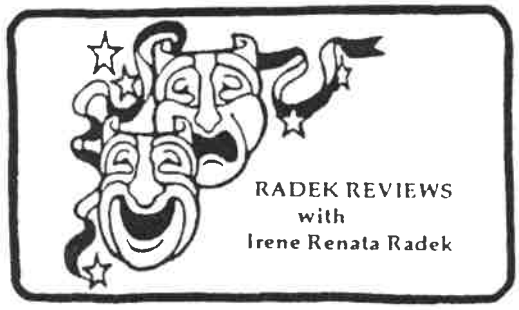

BASIC INSTINCT is controversial not for its alleged sexism, date rape and negative portrayal of lesbians but rather for the insidious dangers of rabid political correctness and special interest group censorship that the movie brings to light.

With **Basic Instinct**, Dutch director Paul Verhoeven (**Total Recall**) has created a "psycho-erotic thriller" about a serial killer who murders men with an ice pick during the sex act. Trigger-happy detective Nick Curran's chief suspect is icy, arrogant author Catherine Trammel, an amazingly beautiful bisexual with whom Nick is soon sexually obsessed.

As dick Nick, Michael Douglas (Oscar winner for **Wall Street**) is his typical tight-jawed, humourless self. You don't hate Nick for being flawed, but neither is it easy to care about him or understand why Catherine finds him appealing. She could do much better. Douglas is not an inherently **bad** actor but virtually all of his characters are one-dimensional, stone-faced clones sleepwalking across the screen.

So Sharon Stone (**Total Recall**) steals the show with her portrayal of Catherine, a Grace Kelly/Lizzie Borden hybrid. This cryogenic blonde won the part over such Hollywood names as Ellen Barkin (possible), Geena Davis (hardly) and Mariel Hemingway (not) and made it her own. Stone is at her spectacular best creating incredibly dangerous eroticism while seducing a mesmerised Nick and her lover Roxy (Leilani Sarelli).

Much-needed comic relief is generously provided by the film's most likable character, Nick's police partner Gus, played with humour and truth by George Dzundza (**Impulse**).

And the "Midge" to Stone's "Barbie" (all the **Basic Instinct** women look like dolls by Mattel) is stage actress Jeanne Tripplehorn as police psychiatrist and Nick's sometimes-girlfriend Lisa Gardner, a psychotic Betty Boop - pouty innocence one moment, a lightning temper telegraphing danger the next. Unfortunately Tripplehorn doesn't share Stone's talent for subtle subtext. Consequently her characterisation is much too obvious - one of the chief reasons why **Basic Instinct** is so predictable.

The other reason? Basically, Joe Ezsterhas's $3 million script. Sledgehammer-strength clues are served up far too readily and far too soon. If you haven't identified the murderer 15 minutes into the film, you're not a Mensan (or shouldn't be!). And the tacky little twist at the film's end is too little too late for anyone to care.

Furthermore, without all the gratuitous sex, skin and overhyped controversy, **Basic Instinct** would be just another mediocre murder mystery quick to gather dust on video store shelves. But the mere hint of the MPAA's most restrictive rating is often enough to whet the public's taste for the taboo. And Verhoeven must've expected the film's initial NC-17 rating or why else would he have made tame versions of the steamier scenes?

In the no-no '90s, **Basic Instinct** gives us unsafe sex (eek), relentless smoking - in **restricted** areas no less (egads), drunk driving (yikes) and a dash of drugs and booze for good measure (get those smelling

salts). Such are the horrors and perversions of the 1990s. In the '60s, these elements would've been barely noticeable.

Conversely, in the violence-jaded present, it's the killing that is commonplace and expected. The suspense is not in the crimes but in who's going to get naked next and with whom. What a twisted world it is when violence has become more acceptable than human sexual contact. Now **this** is controversy!

Antithetically, the negative portrayal of lesbians, sexism and date rape allegations are **not**. Chris Fowler of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation charges that **Basic Instinct** "depicts gays and lesbians as villains, as murderers, as emotionally unstable people and the community is outraged." Oh puh-leez. Catherine and Roxy's relationship is the most tender and functional of them all. Furthermore, bisexual Catherine is smart, sexy and very self-assured and what's so bad about that? Does the fact that Catherine is a bisexual murder suspect mean that ALL bisexuals are murderers? Hardly. So what else? Do homosexuals NEVER commit murder? Are straight WASPS the ONLY segment of society that kills? What a ridiculous concept.

As Douglas stated, "We're getting so politically correct that it's almost impossible to make a film." And Stone succinctly added, "I respect [GLADD's] freedom of speech; I want them to respect my freedom of expression." Fair enough. Otherwise we have the ominous and odious censorship that most of these self-same activists also rail against - but only, it seems, when it's convenient for **their** particular cause. In today's politically correct climate, even **The Wizard of Oz** would be impossible to make for all the protesting by activist groups representing small people, witches and monkeys. Selective free-speech-**only**-when-you-agree-with-my-point-of-view equals blatant censorship and the generally vituperative reaction to **Basic Instinct** proves that we are regressing where freedom is concerned.

As for sexism, all the film's women do look like Barbie dolls but they can outthink, outtalk and outdrive all the **Basic Instinct** men so this allegation is rather pointless.

And the alleged date rape scene between Nick and Lisa is quite obviously consensual sex. Just because Lisa mentions **after the fact** that Nick was unusually rough doesn't eliminate the fact that she was an eager and willing participant throughout their encounter.

Even Jan de Bont's spectacular cinematography raises audience eyebrows. **Basic Instinct**'s car chases over and around the San Francisco hills are stomach-churningly effective and the eye-popping up-the-dress shot of Stone is appropriately disconcerting. However, 7/8ths of the nudity (including Douglas's saggy butt) and the needlessly sensationalistic photos of brutally slain children are further examples of **Basic Instinct**'s shameless overkill.

Basic Instinct will leave both the murder mystery buff and the 'buff' buff wanting decidedly more as the film's real controversy lies not in what the public is shown but rather in what **Basic Instinct** shows about the public.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Uncongenial stars: Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain**; the sources of Hitchcock's **Vertigo**; book reviews (e.g. 'A Heart at Fire's Centre', 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films'). Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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'WE WERE WRONG'

'MacGuffin' 6 contained about the usual number of solecisms, gaffs and misspellings - despite our best efforts to eradicate them. Special apologies to Charles Barr for misspelling his key term 'hypnagogia' at one point. Another misspelling, elsewhere in the issue, was of 'Hays Office' as 'Hayes Office'. Will H. Hays (1879-1954) was, of course, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America when, in 1930, he drew up the strictures of the Production Code ...

In the same issue we claimed that Flaubert's 'Madame Bovary' had been filmed just twice before Chabrol's recent French version starring Isabelle Huppert. In fact, there have been at least four versions beside Chabrol's: (1) in 1932, with Lila Lee (**Unholy Love**, USA); (2) in 1934, with Valentine Tessier (France); (3) in 1937, with Pola Negri (Germany); and (4) in 1949, with Jennifer Jones (USA).

* Irene Radek has written to tell us that she finally caught **Fried Green Tomatoes ...** and that it displaces **Hook** from her 10 best of '91 list.

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The Million Pound Mystery: Hitchcock's 'Suspicion' (1941)

In the end Lina's mind was made up for her.
After all these years she awoke to the realization that she was going to have a baby.
At all costs Johnnie must not be allowed to reproduce himself. Lina crushed ruthlessly down the new urge to live that her condition had induced. At **all** costs.
An illegal operation hardly entered her mind; suicide was terrible; Johnnie's way was the easiest of all.
Lina felt much calmer when her decision had been made at last. So much of her married life had been spent in beating from one side of the cage to the other. It would be peaceful just to sit and wait.

- 'Francis Iles' (A. B. Cox), 'Before the Fact' (1932)

It is well known that happy marriages are rare, just because it is of the essence of marriage that the principal aim is not the present, but the coming generation. However, let it be added for the consolation of tender and loving natures that passionate sexual love is sometimes associated with a feeling of an entirely different nature, namely real friendship based on harmony of disposition, which nevertheless often appears only when sexual love proper is extinguished in its satisfaction.

- Arthur Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Volume II

Clarity requires that we distinguish ... three elements in Freud's death instinct. Nirvana, the repetition-compulsion, and masochism may all represent death, but if they do, they represent different aspects of death.

- Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History' (1959)

All three elements of the death instinct figure in the ending Hitchcock wanted for **Suspicion**. The most obvious is masochism. Lina (Joan Fontaine) **submits** to her own murder because it's something she has half-desired all along. In effect, she's simply being feminine - in the sense proposed by Krafft-Ebing when he speaks of masochism as morbidly reinforcing "certain characteristics of woman's soul".[1]

But Lina's submissive death also accords with Freud's Nirvana principle, i.e. a tendency "to reduce ... or to remove internal tension due to stimuli".[2] There's a corresponding moment at the end of **Psycho** (1960) where 'Mrs Bates' tells us she's "not even going to swat that fly", i.e. she's no longer going to **react**. In turn, that remark (unwittingly?) points to the origin of the term 'Nirvana' in Buddhism, where taking even an insect's life is forbidden and where 'Nirvana' refers to "the abolition of [human] individuality ... a state of quietude and bliss".[3]

As for the element of repetition-compulsion, it's central to **Suspicion**. But I'll suggest in a moment that its relation to Lina's death-by-poisoning is ambiguous, and thus accords with Freud's own ambivalent position vis-à-vis the link between pleasure and annihilation.[4]

* * *

The key to **Suspicion** may well be the early scene set on a hillock behind Lina's neighbourhood church. To this lonely, windswept spot Johnnie (Cary Grant) brings her on their first 'date'. Far from being a romantic place, it's more like a graveyard. We come upon the couple fiercely tussling, as if he'd just tried to murder, or rape, her. But she fends him off - then starts apologising. He must think her provincial, she says. Even so, she won't allow him a kiss. That only comes later - as a **reaction** on Lina's part to an overheard remark of her father's.

The hillock scene is later evoked three times. First, soon after the above incident, when Lina suspects Johnnie has ditched her, she wanders disconsolately back to the identical spot. It's as if she somehow felt guilty and, in Freud's words describing the repetition-compulsion, were trying "to make the psychic trauma real - to live through once more a repetition of it".[5] In other words, the spot has come to represent for Lina some still earlier, forgotten nay-saying.

Second, the hillock scene is evoked on the night Lina turns her husband out of their bedroom, i.e. in a prelude to the poisoning scene. (From the moment Lina suffers a fainting spell that night, she's destined not to leave the bedroom alive - at least, not in the version of the film Hitchcock wanted.) Third, the hillock scene is evoked in the last scene of the present film when Lina, still alive, decides she'll flee to her mother's ...

* * *

In short, the scene on the hillock represents Lina's **repression**, and its recurring mention in the film corresponds to the repetitive aspect of Freud's death instinct. How ironic, though, that Lina's submission to her own murder should involve - at last - an aspect of yea-saying! Here's how Hitchcock describes the poisoning scene:

> The scene I wanted, but it was never shot, was for Cary Grant to bring her a glass of milk that's been poisoned ... Joan Fontaine has just finished a letter to her mother: "Dear Mother, I'm desperately in love with him, but I don't want to live because he's a killer. Though I'd rather die, I think society should be protected from him." Then, Cary Grant comes in with the fatal glass and she says, "Will you mail this letter to Mother for me, dear?" She drinks the milk and dies.[6]

Hitchcock adds that a final shot would have shown Cary Grant, whistling cheerfully, popping the letter in the mailbox. Now, the symbolism here is complex, with several allusions being made to earlier scenes, but I'll argue shortly that the crucial thing is the description of **a parodic love scene**. In effect, we're being told that a husband resorts to impregnating his wife with a poison whose doubly fatal consequences (the offspring?) he has only half foreseen ...

* * *

Here I want to refer to Norman O. Brown's speculative study of Freudian theory, 'Life Against Death'[7] - a most Hitchcockian title. To the extent that Brown envisages a future where "general repression" has ceased to exist - along with its accompanying "neurosis" and "unconscious bent for self-destruction" - he reminds us of just how different Lina and Johnnie's marriage might have been.

By contrast, what the film actually gives us is the emblematic hillock scene plus what is in some ways a very **English** marriage. The wedding ceremony takes place in a registry office on whose windows (a characteristically English) rain is falling. The foreshadowing is in keeping with a passage from Chapter 1 of the novel:

> Having lived all her life in the country, where people do not talk about these things, [Lina] had never realized that the percentage of happy marriages among the population of Great Britain is probably something under .0001.

I mentioned Freud's ambivalence concerning pleasure versus annihilation. In **Suspicion**, it's fair to say, the dashing but irresponsible Johnnie represents the pleasure-principle while Lina - who shows a marked parental streak anyway - constantly finds herself having to invoke the reality-principle. As we've just seen, the outcome is suggestively ironic because it involves the annihilation of **both** characters.

Well, Brown would propose a 'Nietzschean' solution to the matter. He begins by noting how "the ultimate aim of the pleasure-principle" is Nirvana - but because the pessimistic Schopenhauer (who introduced the term 'Nirvana' to the West) "cannot affirm life", rejects that philosopher's seeming affirmation of death as "spurious". Instead, Brown turns to Nietzsche's Superman. Nietzsche, we're told, affirms both life **and** death. Further, whereas "repressed humanity" strives to immortalise individual life and property, thereby showing its own "flight from death", Nietzsche simply affirms an eternity of (non-neurotic) repetition:

> 'Joy ... does not want heirs, or children - joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same.'[8]

Which, historically, has made for some fine poetry and several interesting characters in drama and film, from Ibsen's Brand to Hitchcock's Brandon (in the 1948 **Rope**). Nevertheless, it would seem that Schopenhauer, Freud and Hitchcock, pessimists all, are united in doubting the **feasability** of the Superman solution.

On the other hand, if Schopenhauer's view of marriage allows the possibility of eventual harmony, if not true Nirvana, "when sexual love proper is extinguished" - see the quote at the head of this article - then **Suspicion** follows suit to the extent of presenting at least a parody of such harmony in its final scene. The marriage itself is a succession of (decidedly non-Nietzschean) reactions ...

* * *

The above sketch of the film obviously needs checking in detail against some key scenes and sequences. First, though, I must take issue with a couple of Donald Spoto's claims in his two Hitchcock books. Those claims are: (a) that the ending Hitchcock said he wanted for **Suspicion**, but didn't shoot, was only invented by him in hindsight, after the film's release;[9] and (b) that the film's present ending is "entirely consistent with everything that has preceded".[10]

As regards point (a), it can be refuted by internal evidence from the film itself. As for (b), it overlooks at least one glaring **in**consistency in the present ending.

(a) Hitchcock was forbidden by RKO "to cast Cary Grant as a killer".[11] So it's naive of Spoto to expect that drafts of the script would disclose the ending in which Lina's worst suspicions about her husband prove true. That's just what the drafts could **not** disclose.

Actually, Hitchcock seems to have recalled a dodge he'd used in 1929 when shooting the silent version of **Blackmail**. On that occasion, as Charles Barr notes,[12] he'd "made contingency plans of his own" for converting the silent version to a sound version - which the producers duly commissioned. With **Suspicion**, there's evidence that Hitchcock shot the film hoping to get last-minute approval of his 'forbidden' ending. For instance, midway through the film Lina twice goes shopping in her local village. Both times, emphasis is given an old-fashioned English pillar-box. Hitchcock even makes his customary brief appearance posting a letter, and has the camera twice pan past the box to further stress it. Now, after allowing for the box's status as an icon of unchanging village life (cf. the mailbox outside the schoolteacher's house in **The Birds**), can anyone doubt that what Hitchcock is doing here is lay the foundation for his hoped-for ending - in which Johnnie cheerfully mails his own 'death-warrant'?

I'll mention shortly other examples which illustrate similar preparation.

(b) In the present ending, Johnnie says that far from intending to kill Lina, he'd been thinking of committing suicide because of his heavy gambling debts. He claims he'd even gone to Liverpool in order to try and borrow money on his wife's life-insurance policy, "but that didn't work". Which isn't surprising! Apart from the unlikelihood of his having driven so far instead of simply telephoning, the film has established that **Johnnie's two life insurance companies are both in London.** (For those wishing to check, see the scene in which Lina reads Johnnie's mail one morning while he's in the shower.) So much for his alibi for the time when his best friend, 'Beaky' (Nigel Bruce), had died mysteriously in Paris from an overdose of brandy - and so much, as I say, for Spoto's claim about the present ending being consistent with everything that has preceded!

* * *

But why does Johnnie cite Liverpool specifically? The answer, surely, is that he's made a Freudian slip after reading 'The Trial of Richard Palmer' which he'd borrowed from Lina's friend, the detective story writer, Isobel.[13] For years Liverpool was the home of the real-life mass-poisoner and inveterate gambler, (William) Palmer, whose story Isobel's book tells. (The film changes Palmer's Christian name, but there's no doubt that the book - like much of the film - is about the real person, who was hanged in 1856. For one thing, Isobel mentions how one of Palmer's rich victims died after being challenged to a brandy-drinking contest. That fits the known facts.)[14]

It's not incongruous that Lina never questions Johnnie's Liverpool story. The film has established that he insured her life without consulting her; and she'd only momentarily seen the insurance companies' addresses when she'd once rifled his mail. Which leaves us this teaser: why is Johnnie so interested in reading about Palmer's case anyway? How bizarre that Beaky should die soon afterwards in a practically identical manner to one of Palmer's victims ...

* * *

There's an instructive still,[15] apparently from the film's opening scene on a train, in which Lina reaches out to examine a book the man slumbering opposite her has let fall. The man is her future husband and the book is a detective story called 'The Million Pound Mystery'.

Well, the book's title fits well enough Hitchcock's own - richly ambiguous - tale of marriage, but the business with the book doesn't appear in the film. Perhaps, coming at the start, it struck someone as too portentous. Even so, in the film Johnnie **does** read detective stories and he **is** seen carrying a copy of 'The Million Pound Mystery'. The difference is that now he begins to read such books only after marrying Lina.[16] Notice the gain in ambiguity. For example, are we to infer that Johnnie has been tamed into adopting genteel country ways? Or are we meant to see that he has suddenly become dissatisfied and has taken to reading detective fiction for relief? Or both those things? Or neither? Given that Johnnie himself seems to have an ambiguous, even sinister, side, perhaps he only **pretends** to be interested in the genteel life. But if so, why? For Lina's sake? Or for some nefarious purpose of his own?

In her way, Lina is no less an ambiguous figure than her husband. Trying to be 'adult', she nevertheless often tends to swing between animated girlish rapture and equally girlish bouts of reverie. She's also prone to little social hypocrisies which she would probably scorn in others. That is, Schopenhauer's thoughts on the psychology of everyday life might have had Lina in mind:

> [Just] how little absolute sincerity is to be expected, even from persons otherwise honest, whenever their interest in any way bears on a matter, can be judged from the fact that we often deceive ourselves where hope bribes us, or fear befools us, or suspicion torments us, ... or a small purpose close at hand interferes with one greater but more distant.[17]

Johnnie sees through Lina from the start, as when she tries to refuse his request for a second date (after the hillock scene) by saying she must "make calls with Mother" and he retorts "Liar!" Earlier, she'd accepted an invitation to attend church with the Barhams, her neighbours whom she claims to loathe, simply because Johnnie would be with them. And later, after Johnnie stands her up over the very date he'd so vehemently insisted on, she suffers a headache - from which she makes an instant recovery when he sends word that he'll see her at the Hunt Ball.[18]

Much as in **Psycho**, Hitchcock soon shifts from these everyday 'psychologies' to something on an altogether different plane and scale. But the actual mechanisms of fear and deception continue to operate. Up to a point, and allowing for the ambiguities, you could say that Lina is to Johnnie as Marion Crane is to Norman Bates.

* * *

The remainder of this article will concentrate on three key scenes or episodes: the opening scene on the train, the long central sequence involving Beaky, and the final scene (both as Hitchcock intended it and as it was actually shot).

First, the scene on the train. I've already suggested a couple of reasons why the business with Johnnie's book was dropped; another is that it was supplanted by business we now have involving **Lina's** book. When the scene begins, Lina is reading 'Child Psychology' by Henrietta Wright M.A., M.D. From behind her reading glasses she snootily inspects the playboy-type who has suddenly invaded her first-class compartment. Then a uniformed ticket-inspector enters. The playboy-type proves to have only a third-class ticket but rises to the occasion and pays his excess fare in good style - after prevailing on Lina to contribute a postage stamp. For good measure, he sends the official packing with the remark, "Write to your mother!" Lina now puts her book away and takes up 'The Illustrated London News'. In the magazine's social pages she finds a photograph of "Mr. John (Johnnie) Aysgarth and Mrs. Helen Newsham" at the Merchester races. The man in the photograph is her fellow passenger.

It's a fine scene, transparently told, with several niggly undertones. In turn, most of these prove to be hooks to later scenes. When Johnnie invites the ticket-inspector to "Write to your mother!", the Oedipal assertion is obvious ("Who's a little boy now?"), and Lina is the visible prize. In a classic article,[19] Mark Crispin Miller suggests that the official, with his uniform and moustache, stands in for Lina's father, General McLaidlaw - who indeed takes an instant dislike to Johnnie when they eventually meet.

Not that Johnnie is yet particularly attracted to Lina, seen here at her most glacial. Even when he prevails on her for the loan of a stamp, and **all but** makes symbolic advances by invading her purse, his actions are essentially reflex, i.e. **reactions**. (Long afterwards, Beaky tells Lina how even at school her fast-talking husband had had a reputation for getting out of any scrape.)

Also, Johnnie may have got the better of officialdom on this occasion, yet the line "Write to your mother!" anticipates a time when he'll mail a letter to his own mother (-in-law), bringing officialdom down on him with a vengeance. That is, his penny-halfpenny debt to Lina from the opening scene will hang over him until the end - the one Hitchcock wanted, that is - when she'll give him the letter to mail and his debt will be paid in full.

There's another link between the opening and closing scenes. No doubt a reason why Lina reads 'Child Psychology' is that she works in, or is training for, that field. Hence her commuting each day from Hazledene to London, as indicated by her **monthly** rail ticket. No doubt, too, the book makes suitably proper reading for a young lady in her position, i.e. one who's a member of the gentry and who's travelling first-class and alone. But what's crucial about it is surely how it implies Lina's own psychology. She seems to see herself as both still a child (for whom adult psychology remains a mystery) and as a would-be **mother** of a child (with the book itself presently being a substitute source of gratification).[20] The film's climax, then, constitutes a rejoinder. In it, Lina is still childless. And lately she has even taken to expelling her husband from the bedroom. So it's with high irony that Johnnie brings her his final offering, an innocent glass of white liquid, which both panders to and mocks all her views of herself, her childish fears, her hopes ...

* * *

'Beaky' Thwaite, a middle-aged bachelor, enters the film immediately after Lina and Johnnie have had their first tiff since getting married. He smokes a pipe and uses a peculiarly 'rural' turn of phrase about "putting my foot in it again, what?" Lina takes to this simple fellow, a parody of her gruff father, straight away.[21]

Yet Beaky is closely linked to the ambiguity attending Johnnie, an ambiguity seen through Lina's eyes and which keeps on deepening. Although he explains his visit by saying he'd just happened to be passing, it soon turns out that he'd run into Johnnie at the races and found himself invited back to stay the weekend. Thus we learn that Johnnie has broken a promise to Lina to keep away from race-tracks - and that he'd "lost a packet". Of course, there's no connection between the loss and his invitation to his rich friend to visit ...

Nor, of course, is there a link between Beaky's visit and the couple's tiff shortly before, nor any question of Johnnie's really being the "baby" Lina has suddenly claimed to see! (He's no **puer aeternis**, is he?) True, he plays up to her, e.g. by putting a pencil in his mouth and looking glum, but no doubt he'd defend himself by saying that his wife's estimation of him is distorted by her own needs. Why, look how she's soon even telling Beaky it's time **he** grew up! Beaky, that veritable Solomon!

Actually, the truth about Beaky is complex. At one level, he's the escapee from the never-never world of P. G. Wodehouse exactly as Lina, in the novel, imagines him to be. At another level, he's an extension of both Johnnie and the marriage, his arrival in the household coinciding with, for example, Johnnie's reading of (traditional English) detective novels which Lina buys her husband in the village. Finally, at the level of the film's subtext, he may seem to hold out the prospect of the marriage attaining the "real ... harmony of disposition" described by Schopenhauer - except that his very unreality makes that impossible. Beaky parodies, for example, virility, as he parodies Nietzschean "joy" ...

* * *

Johnnie and Beaky's land speculation scheme provides the film with a **tour de force** of plotting and suspense. Behind the scheme, almost unmentioned after the initial tiff with Lina, are Johnnie's mounting debts, exacerbated by a spot of embezzlement that had got found out.

Needless to say, Beaky proves willing to put up the scheme's capital. Yet one day, after Lina raises objections, Johnnie says he's calling everything off. He'd merely like for Beaky to drive with him to the cliff-top site so that he can "prove" that the scheme was no good. That's all right, replies Beaky, he's satisfied with his friend's decision. But Johnnie insists. What's more, he stipulates "early tomorrow morning" for their departure, so as to avoid traffic. And that's surprising, because the film has established that Johnnie detests rising early.[22]

Again Beaky protests: "it'll be cold and nasty and wet". Johnnie says they'll leave at seven o'clock. Beaky is forced to make a joke in order to hide his annoyance. "That's a bit pig's tail", he says, meaning "twirly", meaning "too early". Suddenly, cutting off this badinage, the film gives us Lina's suspicion that Johnnie intends pushing his friend over a cliff. We're shown her horrified mental image of Beaky, laughing at his own joke, falling through space. Then she faints.

All along it's been plausible that Johnnie has simply wanted to do the decent thing by his friend's best interests and his wife's doubts, i.e. he has merely wanted to prove his point (which concerns the quality of the soil at the development site). After all, he's merely the same caring fellow (isn't he?) who got carried away and ran up huge debts at the start of the marriage so that his lovely wife could keep living in the style she'd been used to ... Yet the film also artfully manipulates us into seeing that Lina's fears may be justified, that Johnnie may really be planning murder.

Naturally, in true Hitchcock fashion, the matter isn't dismissed after just one or two good scenes. On the contrary, it intensifies. When Lina regains consciousness, she's in bed next morning. Johnnie and Beaky have already left. Hurriedly, she drives to the cliff-top where she sees tyre-marks indicating that a car may have gone over. But as there's no sign of the two men, she returns home. At first the house seems deserted. Then she hears Johnnie whistling, as if to himself - a Strauss waltz. Next moment, Beaky comes into view ...

Lina **reacts**. As if feeling guilty for having denied her husband something - unnamed - to which he'd been entitled, and overjoyed that he **hasn't** killed his best friend, she flings off her coat like a stripper's

gloves and runs to embrace him. Meanwhile, the Strauss waltz plays exultantly, and a cloud hovering over the house obligingly moves away.

But, no, a new era of Johnnie-Lina relations isn't about to begin. The very next minute, Lina learns that Beaky **had** nearly been killed. His car had rolled towards the edge of the cliff with him in it. Fortunately, Johnnie had been nearby and had managed to jump on board to grab the brake. Or that's how Beaky remembers it. (The novel gives Johnnie an additional motive for saving his friend: he'd suddenly realised that Beaky's money was tied up in a Paris bank under an alias ...)

* * *

Again the ambiguity deepens. In subtle ways, Lina begins to suspect her husband of philandering. The implication is that infidelity is better than murder, whose possibility she doesn't want to face. Her suspicions are aroused when Beaky says he must go to Paris about some securities. He lets drop that on his last visit a prostitute had picked him up in the Champs Elysées and defrauded him. He invites Johnnie to come with him this time to celebrate having saved his life. Johnnie declines as "a married man" but says he'll accompany Beaky as far as London. In the next scene, Lina receives news from two county police officers that Beaky has died in Paris after drinking brandy given him by an unidentified Englishman.

This is the scene analysed by Stephen Heath in an article on "Narrative Space".[23] The two policemen are respectively a senior and a junior officer, like two bobbies in **The 39 Steps** (1935) who watch a show at the London Palladium from the wings. In both cases the naive reactions of the younger man provide a comic touch: for instance, the young policeman in **Suspicion** is visibly disconcerted by a Picasso-like painting in the Aysgarths' hall.

Perhaps the crucial thing about that painting, though, is how the dark lines of its design echo the dark shadows, like curving bars of a cage, cast on the surrounding walls. Which allows a further observation. The naive young policeman gazes at the painting, trying to fathom it, and has to be nudged by his colleague; "provincial" Lina gazes at a newspaper item about Beaky's death and goes into a trance, from which she has to be roused by the same senior officer. A moment later, as she turns from showing the policemen out, the shadows in the hall seem about to overwhelm her ...

Lina now apostrophises her late father's portrait: "He didn't go to Paris, I tell you." She rings Johnnie's club in London, the Hogarth Club. (Here's another subtle touch, and again one which concerns an artist: William Hogarth painted such famous subjects as 'Marriage à la Mode' and 'The Rake's Progress'.) But Johnnie had checked out the previous morning, in plenty of time to have accompanied Beaky. Lina sinks back into her trance - which is how Johnnie finds her when he enters silently, much as he'd found her the time her father died ...[24]

Johnnie professes to be cut up about his friend's death. "I loved that silly, generous, good-hearted fool", he tells his wife. "Next to you, I loved him more than anybody in the world." That's doubtless true. But next minute he speaks a palpable lie. He telephones the police to report that he's back from his trip, and tells them he'd seen Beaky off at Croydon Airport. Then he adds: "I stayed in London at my club until this afternoon."

There are, I think, essentially just three possible reasons for Johnnie's lie. First, the most obvious: he'd actually gone to Paris with Beaky and murdered him, knowing of his friend's allergy to brandy. Second, he'd gone to Paris with Beaky but only to engage in a little extra-marital fun.[25] Third, and this is the reason he gives at the end of the film: he'd gone alone to Liverpool to try and borrow money on his wife's life-insurance policy. But it's far from clear why, in the circumstances, he'd bother concealing the Liverpool trip - if that's where he'd really gone.

* * *

Late in the film, Lina and Johnnie visit Isobel's for dinner. Muffled drumbeats are heard. Lina is subdued but looks particularly lovely; she's even wearing the pearls she wore the night she first waltzed with Johnnie, the night he proposed.[26] He, too, is almost his old self, being as alert and talkative as ever.

In contrast, the hostess and the other guests are a sexless bunch: the exceedingly self-sufficient Isobel (a parody of Lina?), her humourless pathologist brother, his mannish wife (friend? sister?).

The tone now approaches that of the MGM film **Night Must Fall** (1937).[27] On returning home, Johnnie locks up, pointing out that the cook and the maid are both away. He leads Lina by the hand upstairs; when he notices that she's shivering, he suggests that she undress for bed. By now it seems likely that he's either going to make love to her or kill her. In other words, as he himself notes, the situation reprises (the ambiguity of) the hillock scene. And once again Lina resists. Telling Johnnie to sleep in his dressing-room, she shuts the door on him. Then she faints.

Lina has reached a point where unwanted events must seem to be repeating themselves over and over. Consequently, she must feel rather like a helpless child again. Almost a corpse ... She wakes in bed next day to find Johnnie and Isobel looking at her concernedly. Isobel tells her that Bertram, i.e. the pathologist brother, has examined her and pronounced that she just needs "a little sleep". Johnnie goes to arrange some supper. From what Isobel says, it seems that he has spent the afternoon pressuring her to reveal her trade secrets - like the name of a certain poison, a common household substance, which induces "a most pleasant death" and leaves no trace ...

A premonitory shot of a clock ticking introduces the scene of Johnnie bringing Lina a glass of milk as a nightcap. (To the point where he sets down the milk and leaves the room, the scene apparently coincides with the 'forbidden' climax.) A sword-point of light from the kitchen thrusts its way into the hall. Then Johnnie mounts the stairs with the milk on a tray. The waltz love-theme plays slowly in a low, sinister register. Here it's impossible not to think of how the poet Keats invoked the nightingale (in lines which prompted the title of an early draft of **Vertigo**):

> Darkling I listen; and for many a time
> I have been half in love with easeful death
> . . .
> Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain ...

"Goodnight, Lina", Johnnie says, leaving the milk by the bed.[28]

* * *

A recurring Hitchcock theme is that of the second chance which comes too late. Were Lina to bravely drink that glass of milk which she suspects is poisoned, it's questionable whether her gesture would reconcile life and death in a 'Nietzschean' sense - at any rate, in her own case, for presumably she'd soon die (and Johnnie after), and that would be an end of it. But what of our case? Lina's gesture, **qua** gesture, effectively negates the hillock scene and the repression it stands for, as it effectively substitutes Nietzsche's joyful 'recurrence' for the repetition-compulsion. (Cf. Isobel's "a most pleasant death".) That is, in a poetic sense, which Keats called truth, **Lina is showing us the way**. In 'MacGuffin' 4, I ended my review of **Psycho** by quoting another poet, T. S. Eliot:

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything) ...

That Nirvana-like condition does seem to me what Hitchcock's preferred ending for **Suspicion** would have parodied, too.

Let me be clear. Lina herself remains to the end provincial, repressed, estranged from her husband, given to (narcissistic) reverie or (masochistic) trance. The film isn't explicit about the couple's marital relations, but I think it's clear from the film's progressively ironic use of the waltz motif that those relations worsen rather than get better. (In the novel the opposite seems the case, and Lina ends up pregnant.)[29]

But more can be said about Lina's final gesture. For a start, it's obviously of the gallant, 'all for love'

kind that had appealed to Hitchcock since the silent days and which Lesley Brill writes about with feeling in 'The Hitchcock Romance'.[30] Also, the gesture may remind us of how Lina is one of several childless women in Hitchcock's films who are made to pay the ultimate price for their barrenness - yet who, in paying it, give us a glimpse of a **form of birth** that is edifying.

In **Suspicion** a glass of milk comes to stand for both motherhood and babyhood. Were Lina to drink that milk, to ingest that white fluid brought to her in waltz-time up a symbolic staircase[31] by her husband, she would be accepting the impregnation she has resisted all along. As well, such surrender on Lina's part would mean that she willingly became like a little child, something else she has strenuously opposed. But notice how in that case mother and child would be one! At such a rich moment, so near and yet so far from what Schopenhauer approximated as Nirvana, but which he freely admitted "remains for ever inaccessible to all human knowledge precisely as such",[32] Hitchcock's film raises issues of madness and incest. We are in Oedipal territory again, on a trajectory running from **The Lodger** (1926) through **Rebecca** (1940) and on through **Psycho** ...[33]

* * *

Of course, in the final scene as we have it, Lina doesn't drink the milk, which may not be poisoned anyway, and she doesn't die. Now, I've noted that the marriage was undertaken in a spirit of reaction - less chemical than psychological (she'd feared being left an old maid). Since the honeymoon, it's been a pivotal irony how the very love that might have set everything right between the couple has itself become problematic. The marriage has continued in the spirit with which it began, of one reaction after another.

Unfortunately for the film, the fact that Lina leaves the milk undrunk proves little, and largely just sets up the possibility of a fresh round of fears and recriminations. Other endings than the present one were scripted and quickly rejected. (In one, Johnnie atones for his past misdeeds by going off to join the RAF.) In the present final scene, Lina packs to go to her mother's house, and Johnnie insists on driving her. **Again** she thinks he's trying to kill her (and **again** the hillock scene is evoked), but this time successive revelations come tumbling forth with unseemly haste. For a scene that's supposed to represent some sort of return to reality, it lacks conviction.

We hear that Lina has selfishly misconstrued almost everything, for Johnnie has been intending to commit not murder but suicide. (His dubious claim about having gone to Liverpool isn't cleared up, of course.) Altogether, the scene has the feel of a Monty Python skit:

> Man, waving gun at frightened lady: 'Don't worry. I'm not going to shoot you.'
> Frightened lady, cheering up: 'Oh, that's all right, then.'

Yet a weak ending doesn't necessarily a bad film make. **Suspicion** has already presented us with an ingenious collection of thrills and twists, and given us a surreal account of a marriage which pre-dates Bunuel's **El** (1953) by more than a decade ...[34]

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Notes

1. Quoted in J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, 'The Language of Psychoanalysis' (1988), p. 245. For Lina's views (in the Francis Iles novel) on Krafft-Ebing, see note 29 below.

2. S. Freud, quoted in Laplanche & Pontalis, p. 272.

3. Laplanche & Pontalis, p. 272. For discussion of Buddhist parallels at the end of **Psycho**, see my review of that film in 'MacGuffin' 4. For Buddhist connotations in **Vertigo** (1958), and for a note on Scottie's refusal to 'let go', i.e. to cease reacting, see my review in 'MacGuffin' 1. Also, recall how **Rear Window** (1954) ends with Lisa putting aside the book 'Beyond the High Himalayas' - which she'd only started to read

to please Jeff - and turning to 'Harper's Bazaar' instead. It's a piece of business which parallels some business in the opening scene of **Suspicion**, which I discuss in the present article. But my point here is that 'Beyond the High Himalayas' evokes not just the political situation in Tibet - where the Dalai Lama would soon be forced to flee abroad - but also an alternative way of looking at the world which the already complacent Lisa now turns her back on ...

4. Freud's ambivalence re pleasure is discussed in Chapter VIII of Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death' (1959). See also Laplanche & Pontalis, p. 273.

5. Quoted in N. Fodor and F. Gaynor, 'Freud: Dictionary of Psychoanalysis' (1958), p. 131. The same quotation adds that if the psychic trauma "was [from] an early affective relationship it is revived in an analogous connection with another person".

6. Quoted in F. Truffaut, 'Hitchcock' (1967).

7. Brown, op. cit. The crucial chapter for the present analysis is the already-mentioned Chapter VIII, "Death, Time, and Eternity", from which I've drawn several quotations used in the text.

8. F. Nietzsche, quoted in Brown, Chapter VIII. Nothing changes, it seems. We're still in joyless flight from our own deaths, and a recent newspaper article noted how "human immortality is actually an item on the speculative scientific agenda these days". Again cf. **Vertigo**, and Scottie's reluctance to 'let go' ...

9. D. Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992 edition), p. 101; cf. D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), pp. 243-4.

10. Spoto (1992), p. 107.

11. Ibid, p. 101.

12. C. Barr, "**Blackmail**: Silent & Sound", in 'Sight & Sound', Spring 1983.

13. According to author and crime writer H. R. F. Keating (e.g. in his book 'Crime & Mystery: the 100 Best Books', 1987), Francis Iles based the character of Isobel on Dorothy Sayers. Sayers was one of several writers after World War I who contributed to a cycle of novels and stories about spouse-murder. For instance, both Iles and Aldous Huxley wrote stories inspired by the Armstrong poisoning case. Agatha Christie's 'Philomel Cottage' was adapted to the stage - by Hitchcock actor Frank Vosper - as 'Love From a Stranger', and was twice filmed under that title, in 1936 and 1947. Sayers's contribution to the cycle includes a story 'Suspicion' (1939) ...

14. For a succinct biography of William Palmer, see the entry in C. Wilson and P. Pitman, 'Encyclopaedia of Murder' (1961).

15. Reproduced in G. Perry, 'Hitchcock' (1975), p. 57.

16. For confirmation, refer to the scene in Lina's local village where she runs into the catty Mrs Newsham.

17. A. Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. II. What unifies all of Schopenhauer's observations, including those cited in the present article, is his emphasis on the generally pernicious function of Will. As regular 'MacGuffin' readers know, I think a similar pessimism informs Hitchcock's films, and especially those he made in America.

18. The headache business anticipates **Psycho**, of course. There's also a similar moment in William Wyler's **The Heiress** (1949) where Catherine Sloper (Olivia de Havilland) instantly recovers from headache on receiving a proposal of marriage from Morris Townsend (Montgomery Clift). I haven't checked whether Catherine's headache is mentioned in the film's ultimate source, Henry James's 'Washington Square' (1881), but that novel certainly offers many parallels to **Suspicion** (e.g. the repressed spinster, the fortune-hunting suitor, the repressive father).

19. M. C. Miller, "Hitchcock's Suspicions and **Suspicion**", 'Modern Language Notes' 98, no. 5 (December 1983), pp. 1143-1186.

20. Again this anticipates **Psycho** where Marion so badly wants a baby from boyfriend Sam that she **reacts** to the millionaire's reference to his (teenaged) "baby" - who's about to be married - and steals his $40,000. As I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 4, that wad of banknotes ends up parodying the baby Marion never had.

21. Beaky represents a variant of the inoffensive character, Major Giles Lacy, that Nigel Bruce played in **Rebecca**. As a further instance of Hitchcock's audacious use of symbolism, consider the fancy-dress costumes assigned to Giles and his (barren) wife Beatrice, the host's sister, for the Manderley ball. Beatrice dresses up as Boedicea in an impregnable suit of mail; Giles poses as a strong-man in a leopard skin, completing the effect by carrying a couple of lightweight hollow orbs joined by a rod and representing a bar-bell ...

22. In the hunt scene, Johnnie has difficulty in raising a smile for the magazine photographer "at this hour of the morning". Of course, it's possible that marriage could have 'made a new man' of him. But cf. note 25 below.

23. Published in 'Screen', Autumn 1976. In 'MacGuffin' 6, I cited this article as an example of Heath's obscurantist writing style!

24. Like Mrs Danvers in **Rebecca**, Johnnie is seldom seen walking. On the two occasions Lina receives bad news and Johnnie comes to the door of her room, his silent arrival is ambiguous. Does it show considerateness or complicity? (In the novel, Johnnie poisons both Lina's father **and** Beaky.) As for the film's female Oedipal drama, implicit here, this was of course a feature of many '40s women's melodramas. In Robert Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jordan** (1949), the Joan Tetzel character, like Lina in **Suspicion**, keeps on trying to be grown-up but remains "Daddy's little girl" ...

25. Re Johnnie's philandering, Miller, op. cit., notes on p. 1176 the 'innocent' exchange, overheard by Lina, between Johnnie and the maid Ethel as she wakes him one morning after bringing the morning tea and post. "Hello!" he says groggily. "You here again?" (In the novel, Johnnie seduces a succession of maids, and fathers a child by at least one of them.)

26. The film's most 'Nietzschean' moment, when almost anything seems possible, occurs when Johnnie proposes to Lina in front of her father's portrait - which has just slid down the wall with a crash. Lina defies the possible omen by crying out, "It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter!" In a magic touch, Johnnie then hears again the waltz from the Hunt Ball, and Lina hears it too. Henceforth it will be 'their' waltz. They dance. (For a comparable moment of rapport, I think of Howard Hawks's 1945 **To Have and Have Not** and the famous "no strings" scene between Bogart and Bacall.)

Incidentally, for those who worry about such matters, there's a continuity error involving Lina's pearls in the scene at Isobel's. The penultimate time we see her in medium close-up at dinner, the pearls have mysteriously lost a strand!

27. Based on the successful stage play by Hitchcock's friend, actor Emlyn Williams, Richard Thorpe's **Night Must Fall** is perhaps the most obvious cinema precedent for **Suspicion**. (But see also note 13 above.) It, too, is about a boyish psychopath with a penchant for whistling, and here again there was a real-life model: the self-described 'Broth of a Bhoy', Patrick Mahon, executed for murder in 1924.

Hitchcock has acknowledged using a detail from the Mahon case in **Rear Window**. It's also likely that a crucial moment in **Rebecca** was drawn from the same source. Mahon claimed that his victim, Emily Kaye, had stumbled and hit her head on a coal scuttle, and that subsequently he'd taken fright and made efforts to dispose of the body. In **Rebecca**, Maxim claims that he didn't kill Rebecca but that she'd stumbled and hit her head on a piece of ship's tackle, and that subsequently he'd taken fright and made efforts to dispose of the body by burying it at sea. In other words, the ambiguity concerning Maxim provides another precedent - there are several - for Hitchcock's use of ambiguity in **Suspicion**. See also my comments on **Rebecca** in 'MacGuffin' 6.

28. In **The 39 Steps**, Hitchcock makes a joke of a murder which occurs early one morning near the BBC by having a character mimic the radio announcer signing off: "Goodnight, everyone" ...

29. Early in the novel (p. 95), Johnnie says that Lina is "in bed or at board about as much use to a man as a cold in the head". Sixty pages later, i.e. about half-way through, she has read some Krafft-Ebing but found it "very childish and silly ... Certainly it had not encouraged her to let Johnnie open his mind on the matter." However, she now enters on an extra-marital affair of her own, from which Johnnie eventually takes her back.

30. L. Brill, 'The Hitchcock Romance' (1988), passim.

31. Noting the German Expressionist obsession with stairs and corridors, Lotte Eisner cites Otto Rank: staircases are 'representations of the sexual act', while cellars and corridors stand for the female sexual organ. L. H. Eisner, 'The Haunted Screen' (1969), p. 121n.

32. Schopenhauer, Vol. II. Schopenhauer is referring to a point at which the will-to-live has denied itself: "through this denial, the individual will tears itself away from the stem of the species, and gives up that existence in it. We lack concepts for what the will now is ... We can only describe it as that which is free or not to be the will-to-live. For the latter case, Buddhism describes it by the word **Nirvana** ..."

33. In 'MacGuffin' 3, I noted how the Ivor Novello character in **The Lodger** aspires to the all-in-all perfection of Christ, and kills his sister at her coming-out ball as a sacrifice to that perfection, then promises his dying mother to find the killer and be avenged - which perhaps he is when he marries his sister's look-alike, Daisy, in a (seemingly) conventional happy ending and a conventional marriage ... For discussion of the **female** Oedipal trajectory in **Rebecca**, see T. Modleski, 'The Women Who Knew Too Much' (1988), Chapter Three.

34. Amongst several approximate parallels of **Suspicion** with **El**, consider how in both films a house becomes oppressive. In the Bunuel film, a psychotic husband brings his wife to live in a house designed long ago by his architect father; in **Suspicion**, Lina's new house both needs paying for and rapidly acquires ambiguous trappings of the past - her father's gift of two (ugly) old chairs, his (accusing) World War I portrait ...

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Another 'Best of 1991' list

(Astute Melbourne film critic Adrian Martin has "a constitutional objection" to staying strictly in the mainstream when deciding his best films of the year; the following list is drawn from the several hundred films from any source that Adrian viewed on first or re-release in 1991. The list has had to exclude some little-known videos, some Hong Kong actioners, and the final episode of the second series of 'Twin Peaks'.)

1. **L'Atalante** (Jean Vigo, 1934; restored 1991)
2. **The Colour of Pomegranates** (Sergei Paradjanov, 1969)
3. **Belle de Jour** (Luis Bunuel, 1967)
4. **Vinyl**, **Kiss**, **Sleep**, **Beauty No. 2**, **My Hustler** and **Blow Job** (Andy Warhol, 1964-66)
5. **Time of the Gypsies** (Emir Kusturica, 1989)
6. **Alice in the Cities** (Wim Wenders, 1974)
7. **Reversal of Fortune** (Barbet Schroeder, 1991)
8. **Sure Fire** and **All the Vermeers in New York** (Jon Jost, 1990)
9. **El Sur** (Victor Erice, 1983)
10. **Notre Mariage** (Valeria Sarmiento, 1984)
11. **The Last Woman** (Marco Ferreri, 1976)
12. **Sink or Swim** (Su Freidrich, 1990)
13. **The Sheltering Sky** (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1991)

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A Hitchcock Quiz

1. Which Hitchcock films had principal sequences set in the following countries or principalities? (a) Brazil, (b) Germany, (c) Canada, (d) Scotland, (e) Italy, (f) Cuba, (g) Australia, (h) Monaco, (i) Morocco, (j) Austria, (k) Ireland, (l) Switzerland, (m) The Netherlands.

Answers: (a) **Notorious**, (b) **Torn Curtain**, (c) **I Confess**, (d) **The 39 Steps**, (e) **The Pleasure Garden**, (f) **Topaz**, (g) **Under Capricorn**, (h) **To Catch a Thief**, (i) **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956 version), (j) **Waltzes from Vienna**, (k) **Juno and the Paycock**, (l) **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934 version) and **The Secret Agent**, (m) **Foreign Correspondent**.

2. In 1950 Hitchcock was asked to nominate the best movie chase he had ever seen. His answer was:
(a) Richard Barthelmess rescuing Lillian Gish in the ice-floe climax of **Way Down East** (D. W. Griffith, 1920)?
(b) Paul Muni fleeing through the swamps in **I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang** (Mervyn Le Roy, 1932)?
(c) The 'double-chase' in Hitchcock's own **The 39 Steps** (1935)?
(d) Father and son searching for a stolen bicycle in **Bicycle Thieves** (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)?

Answer: (a). (The other titles are Hitchcock's 'runners-up'.)

3. "I had to eliminate every line about science that came out of her mouth." Of which actress in which film was Hitchcock being less than complimentary?
(a) Madeleine Carroll in **Secret Agent** (1936)?
(b) Laraine Day in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940)?
(c) Ingrid Bergman in **Notorious** (1946)?
(d) Julie Andrews in **Torn Curtain** (1966)?

Answer: (d).

4. In which Hitchcock film does he appear with his two Sealyham terriers, Geoffrey and Stanley? And the copyright of which film, as indicated by its credits, is held by these same two canines?
(a) **The Birds**; **The Birds**?
(b) **Torn Curtain**; **Topaz**?
(c) **The Birds**; **Marnie**?
(d) **Marnie**; **Topaz**?

Answer: (c).

5. More than one Hitchcock film has scenes set in the famous Old Bailey, but which film actually re-created the **entire** courtroom in the studio, even down to scratches on the walls?
(a) **Easy Virtue** (1927)?
(b) **The Paradine Case** (1947)?
(c) **Dial M For Murder** (1954)?
(d) **Frenzy** (1972)?

Answer: (b).

(Thanks to Evan Williams for contributing part of this quiz.)

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BACK-ISSUES are available for $5 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy overseas, $4 per copy within Australia.

Hitchcock films discussed in articles so far published include **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** ('MacGuffin' 1), **Stage Fright** ('MacGuffin' 2), **The Lodger** ('MacGuffin' 3), and **Psycho** ('MacGuffin' 4).

'MacGuffin' 5 included an article on Hitchcock's **No. 17** and a table of contents for issues 1-4.

'MacGuffin' 6 included an article on Hitchcock's **The Wrong Man** and a review of the book 'Making Meaning'.

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ODD SPOT: 'PSYCHO'-BABBLE!

When Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) arrives at Norman Bates's motel in **Psycho**, she is driving a Ford car whose licence number is NFB-418. That fact, and Norman's predilection for taxidermy, has prompted such exegeses as one by Donald Spoto - who suggests that the licence prefix stands for 'Norman **Francis** Bates' because Francis was "the saint frequently associated with birds" - and another, possibly made tongue in cheek, by Leland Poague, who claims that the initials refer to 'Norman **Ford** Bates' since "nearly every major character in the film ... is associated with cars produced by the Ford Motor Company".

Spoto made his point about the licence number in the first edition of 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' - it's missing from the second edition - and repeated it in public lectures he gave on the film. One day Hilton Green, the film's assistant director and producer of its three sequels, attended one of Spoto's lectures and heard this particular point with a pang of surprise. Turning to a companion, he mentioned that back in 1960, when **Psycho** was made, it was customary to use the crew's licence plates on prop vehicles (rather than the current practice of using phoney ones). Marion's plates had been his ...

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 8 November 1992/February 1993 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £2.50

LETTERS

(Sorry, everyone, about again skipping a publication date. And 'Radek Reviews' is held over. Meanwhile, we start this bumper issue, which includes a piece on composer Bernard Herrmann and another on Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain**, with the following thoughts from our readers. Good viewing - Ken.)

Christine Davis, Richmond, Victoria, Australia

One of the inexhaustible delights of Hitchcock is that he is such a movable feast; one's favourite Hitchcock constantly changes as one moves through life and films, valuing first one kind of style and representation and then another.

I have always been very fond of **Notorious** and still think it is a very classy film with beautiful depth to its images and very fine central performances. I'm also very fond of **Shadow of a Doubt** because Hitch's representation of small town life, while a parody, is full of warmth and charming detail in the characterisations. Joseph Cotten's Uncle Charlie remains my favourite Hitchcock villain with his handsome face and laconically brutal manner, especially in his famous speech at the dinner table on the just desserts of 'vain, silly women'. In these films Hitchcock and his material seem in perfect accord.

* * *

Adrian Martin, Brighton, Victoria, Australia

I continue to enjoy 'The MacGuffin'. I have a particular fondness for the book reviews, which I think are simultaneously fair, scrupulous and necessarily critical. You have a good way of not just pinpointing the deficiencies of a method but also constructively suggesting what more could be spun out from the author's insights. I also had a lot of time for your discussion of **Suspicion** ['MacGuffin' 7] - which made a lot of sense of what has always been, to me, a frustratingly elliptical and somewhat puzzling Hitchcock movie.

(Editor's note. Adrian's letter supplied an answer to a question posed in these pages as long ago as our first issue. He suggests that the film cited in Chris Marker's **Sans Soleil/Sunless** as referring to the Muir Woods scene in Hitchcock's **Vertigo** is, appropriately, Alain Robbe-Grillet's **L'Immortelle**.)

* * *

Kari Hanet, Head, Screen Studies, Australian Film, Television & Radio School, North Ryde, NSW, Australia

[Regarding] Hitchcock studies at AFTRS, we use his films in a variety of ways, for instance for courses in the use of music in film, for editing courses, and screen analysis classes dealing with various aspects of narrative construction.

(Editor's note. I thank Kari Hanet for this response to our call for information about how Hitchcock is being taught in academia - see also our past couple of issues. Incidentally, several of our readers will remember how Ms Hanet helped promote to English-speaking film scholars the innovative work on Hitchcock done by Frenchman Raymond Bellour, notably the latter's 115-page analysis of **North by Northwest**.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

A Dietrich legacy

A glorious ruby and diamond bracelet worn by Marlene Dietrich in the garden party scene of Hitchcock's **Stage Fright** (1950) was sold recently at a New York Sotheby's auction for over a million dollars. The bracelet, designed for Dietrich by writer Erich Maria Remarque in Paris in 1937, was her favourite piece of jewellery. She put it up for sale a year ago, shortly before she died in poverty, aged 90. The funds will go to her only daughter and family.

Meanwhile, the daughter, now 68, has published 'Marlene Dietrich', containing many revelations about her mother's endless suitors and admirers. For instance, we're told that Dietrich fell for her supporting actor on **Stage Fright**, Michael Wilding, after learning that he had 'a medical affliction that marshalled all of her protective powers. They became lovers quickly and remained so for quite a long time.'

And Donald Spoto's 'Dietrich' has also appeared, to some acclaim. Spoto spends several pages on **Stage Fright** ('a typically Hitchcockian reflection on romantic illusion') and reveals that Dietrich's contributions extended even to the screenplay. She suggested the film's first words - 'Johnny, you do love me, don't you? Say that you love me!' - and the audience hears her voice before it sees her (a great tease, Dietrich thought).

Publications, new and forthcoming

At least three of the contributors to the recent inaugural issue of 'The Hitchcock Annual', published in the US, are writing books on The Master. Tom Cohen's book will be a study of language in Hitchcock. Professor Sidney Gottlieb is preparing a long examination of Hitchcock's early work and kissing-scenes throughout the director's films. David Sterritt's book on six Hitchcock films is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. (Subscriptions to 'The Hitchcock Annual' cost $5 US for individuals or institutions, $6 US overseas. The impressive first issue has 169 pages, by the way. Write to: P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022.)

Meanwhile, several more Hitchcock books have appeared. Theodore Price's 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (Scarecrow Press, $49.50 US, hardcover only) focuses on four recurrent themes: the homosexuality theme, the father/daughter theme, the Jack the Ripper theme, and the influence of the netherworld-sex films of the Weimar era in Germany. Stefan Sharff's 'Alfred Hitchcock's High Vernacular' (Columbia University Press, $32.50 US, hardcover) analyses three Hitchcock films - though not always to the satisfaction of Leland Poague, who reviewed it for 'Film Quarterly'. And Robert E. Kapsis's 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (University of Chicago Press, $16.95 US, paperback) continues its author's methodical investigation of the complex ways in which artistic reputations are made and evaluated. (Brian De Palma and Clint Eastwood receive some attention towards the end of the book.)

Father Neil P. Hurley's 'The Soul in Suspense: Catholic/Jesuit Influences on Hitchcock' (Scarecrow Press) is due in April. It will demonstrate Hitchcock's covert preoccupation with spiritual themes, including conscience, guilt, crises as catalysts of character development, the salvation of nations, and an especial emphasis on the 'unjustly accused'. On what constitutes life's meaning here and hereafter the book evokes Paul Tillich's 'source of ultimate concern'.

* * *

We mentioned last time that the British Film Institute are publishing 360 monographs on individual films - starting with the titles 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Double Indemnity', 'Went the Day Well?' and 'Stagecoach'. Two Hitchcock titles listed as forthcoming are 'Vertigo' by Tim Hunter and 'Blackmail' by Tom Ryall. US readers wanting more information should contact Customer Service, Indiana University Press, 601 N. Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3797.

* * *

Here's another recommendation. Just out, and containing some excellent serious writing on film and TV, is Vol. 5, No. 2 of 'Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture'. It's a special issue on "Film - Matters of Style", guest-edited by Adrian Martin. Individual copies cost $12.50 Australian for persons, $22.50 Australian for institutions. Overseas rates are in US dollars. Write to: Centre for Research in Culture & Communication, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA, 6150, Australia. ('The MacGuffin' hopes to review this special issue later.)

* * *

The British Mensa Film SIG has been resurrected and publishes a newsletter, 'Zoetrope', whenever (a) there's sufficient material, and (b) editor Jane Pitt has time to throw it all together. (Know how you feel, Jane.) Our respective publications will swap material from time to time.

Strange about 'Strangers'

The 1993 edition of Leonard Maltin's 'Movie & Video Guide' gives the standard British and US running time of **Strangers on a Train** (1951), 101 minutes. But Maltin's new entry for the film concludes as follows: 'British version of film, now shown on US cable TV, runs almost two minutes longer, [and] has a different ending and franker dialogue in the first scene where [Farley] Granger and [Robert] Walker meet.' One wonders if cable TV will now also restore some of the cuts which trimmed 16 minutes from the original 132 minutes of **The Paradine Case** (1947), i.e. before a party scene and other material went missing.

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BOOK REVIEW

Smith, Steven C.: 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann' (University of California Press, 1991) - hardcover.

'Benny' Herrmann was born in New York in 1911, the eldest of three Jewish kids from the East Side. Though he soon learned 'tough guy' talk, his application of it afterwards seems often to have been downright crude. When he started attending music classes at New York University and at Juilliard, most of his teachers found him inexcusably abrasive. An exception was the head of the NYU music department, Australian composer Percy Grainger. A man of erratic temperament, Grainger gave classes in folk and ethnic music which alternated lucidity and jumbled mysticism. But Benny saw in him the independence of mind he himself was cultivating. When it turned out that the teacher and his pupil shared a love of Delius's music and Whitman's poetry, a friendship began which would affect the younger man, in particular, for the rest of his life.

However, after reading music and film journalist Steven Smith's fascinating Herrmann biography, I'd suggest that another even more influential figure - paradoxically, not named in the book - was already shaping Benny's destiny: Jean Jacques Rousseau. If ever anyone set out be a true child of the cantankerous Frenchman who advocated the primacy of an authentic inner life, it was Benny. Over the years, several of his acquaintances seem to have sensed some such connection. One day a youthful André Previn came into the MGM commissary and told several amused senior colleagues, 'I met the most amazing guy last night; I really think he should have been born in the eighteenth century'. Everyone immediately knew that he meant Benny.

The point I'm making is central to what follows, and bears elaborating. Benny exemplified what a recent writer has called 'the transcendental pretence', that once-dominant (and dominating) mode of Romantic thought that 'appeared as innocence and common sense but ... embodied a profound arrogance that ... prohibited mutual understanding, and belied human diversity'.[1] For the implications of this concerning Bernard Herrmann's music, just read on.

Smith has interviewed approximately 100 people who knew Benny, and he quotes many of them verbatim. The

book also gives succinct descriptions of each of the composer's principal pieces and scores. The general idea is that the man and the works should illuminate each other. In fact, emphasis falls on the latter, not just because the music has more lasting significance but because it's what Benny himself put first. For instance, he was a 'workaholic'. The day of his first marriage, to young CBS receptionist and later successful scriptwriter, Lucille Fletcher, he took an hour off at lunchtime for the ceremony, then returned to his own desk at CBS as if nothing had happened.

Incidentally, I think some reviewers of Smith's book, like Michael Chanan in 'Sight & Sound' (November 1991), who seem peeved by its lack of extended musical analysis (as distinct from succinct description), have missed the point. There are separate books and articles on Benny's film scores (notably by Graham Bruce and Royal Brown respectively), whereas Smith allows us, virtually for the first time, to understand the composer and the music **together**.

Back to what the book contains. More or less at random, I recall the following. Benny's boyhood friendship with future film director Abraham Polonsky (whom, sadly, he failed to lend his support at the time of the HUAC hearings). His CBS boss Norman Corwin expressing respect for Benny's professional standards but disappointment at his non-interest in political activity. Benny's prodigious reading except of what he called 'intellectual stuff' like philosophy and mathematics. His Anglophilia, even to the point of his joining an exclusive London club which he rarely visited. His enjoyment of his radio (later, film) work for Orson Welles, including his repeated droll quoting during a production of 'A Tale of Two Cities' of Berlioz's 'March to the Scaffold', and an equally droll minor-key use of 'The Bonnie Banks of Scotland' during 'The Thirty-nine Steps'. His inept singing voice. His irrational 1948 declaration that he'd 'never do a movie again' (this, after a disastrous appearance as a guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic and his divorce from Lucille, two events which plunged him into a self-described 'dark night of the soul'). A game which he and Alfred Hitchcock played while washing dishes at the director's house, in which the two men nominated what they'd like to have been outside of the movies: Benny's answer, 'an English publican', and Hitchcock's, 'a hanging judge'. Benny's refusal to score Kubrick's **Lolita** (1962) when told he'd have to include a brief melody by Kubrick's brother-in-law. How by the time a production was mounted in 1970 of Benny's overly glum musical, 'The King of Schnorrers' (lyrics by Diane Lampert, libretto by Shimon Wincelberg), none of its creators was on speaking terms. And one more instance of the composer's drollery: how for a scene in Larry Cohen's **It's Alive!** (1974), in which a Carnation milkman is bloodily murdered in the back of his delivery truck, Benny cued it as 'The Milkman Goeth' ...

Benny himself left us in 1975. The subject of death had long been a Romantic preoccupation of his, and of course he had often spun musical fantasies about it; especially so, in his work for Welles and Hitchcock. For some reason, his collaboration with those directors brought out the statistician in everyone. In 1985 Welles said that Herrmann's music was '50% responsible' for the artistic success of **Citizen Kane** (1941); Hitchcock had already conceded that '33% of the effect of **Psycho** [1960] was due to the music'; and Benny had said in 1975 that Hitchcock 'only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it for him.' (Until his death, Benny hoped to resume the collaboration with Hitchcock which had been ruptured by their falling out over the score for **Torn Curtain** in 1966. Sadly, Smith shows that such hope remained largely only on Benny's side.)

But whatever its exact measure, clearly we're talking about the work of a near-genius. I have to use that term because the only person in the book who doesn't qualify 'genius' when applying it to Benny is Burt Lancaster, whose first film as a director, **The Kentuckian** (1955), Benny scored. As we've seen, the composer himself admitted to self-doubts when his career faltered on more than one occasion. Perhaps as qualified as anyone to make a considered judgment in this matter is Elmer Bernstein, a Herrmann protégé. His verdict? Simply that Benny was 'the greatest ostinato writer who ever lived'. (Michael Chanan defines ostinato as 'a short repeated musical figure frequently found in accompaniments in classical music'.) In other words, what Benny lacked musically were certain conventional attributes, like the ability to write sustained melody and counterpoint; he could also be a lazy conductor and a careless judge of his own performances. On the other hand, he was a **great** screen composer and a fierce exponent of musical individualism, not necessarily his own. He championed the work of Charles Ives (1874-1954), with its use of atonality and frequent resort to American folk idioms, because he immediately recognised that here was a valid 'voice' asking to be heard. After Benny wrote an article in 1945 that thoughtfully analysed Ives's four symphonies, the older man responded, 'You instinctively sense the innate something beneath the music, up from which it comes'. You would have to award points to Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Romantic notions of genius, after that comment.

Importantly, such comments are still heard. Wagner authority Bryan Magee has written of the German composer that in Act I of 'The Valkyrie', 'for the first time in his work, [he] hit the gusher to the unconscious'.[2] My point is, this line of thinking returns us to what Professor Robert Solomon describes (and condemns) as 'the transcendental pretence':

> Fully developed, the transcendental pretence has two central components: first, the remarkable inner richness and expanse of the self, ultimately encompassing everything; and secondly, the consequent right to project from the subjective structures of one's own mind, and ascertain the nature of humanity as such.[3]

There's surely a clue here as to why Herrmann and others (like Grainger and Ives) were so comfortable with researching and borrowing from various musical folk idioms. The lonely genius might be more a man of the people than the rest of us. But equally, you can see why Benny was so well suited to score the 'expressionist' work of filmmakers like Welles, Brahm and Hitchcock. About the latter, Benny himself said that he and Hitchcock shared 'a great unanimity of ideas'.

Undoubtedly it's nice when your own intuitions sometimes seem confirmed. Running through Smith's book is a small motif involving Charles Dickens's ghost story, 'A Christmas Carol'. In 1930, on Christmas Eve, Benny was entranced as he listened to Abraham Polonsky's sister, Charlotte, read to him. As he later confided to his diary, 'I was carried away to a fog ridden London street and the room of old Scrooge ... an age which will never return save through our imagination and Dickens'. Probably Benny himself had chosen that particular tale as fitting the occasion, for even when still a boy he'd been captivated by evocations of bustling, foggy London in writers like Dickens and Conan Doyle. And naturally he was delighted when, in 1938, Orson Welles's Mercury Players decided to perform 'A Christmas Carol' on the radio with an ideally cast Lionel Barrymore. The best moments of the resulting score, says Smith, were the dark and oppressive bits, especially those concerning Marley's ghost and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come ... Sixteen years later, Benny got to do yet another adaptation of the tale, this time for television, with Frederic March playing Scrooge. However, what I find most significant here is that the lyrics of this musical version were written by playwright Maxwell Anderson, just two years before he and Benny collaborated on Hitchcock's **The Wrong Man** (1957) - which I've already described in 'MacGuffin' 6 as being in the vein of 'A Christmas Carol' and 'Bleak House' (also by Dickens), and full of ghostly watchers. Moreover, I was intrigued to read in Smith's book that someone else had noted part of the same parallel. A year after **The Wrong Man** came out, Benny sent Hitchcock a review from Australia (of all places) with the following passage underlined: 'The film is a certainty for our 10-best list for 1957 ... The gaunt sound-track ... is a series of plucked low notes from the musician's own double-bass, always in a rhythm to suggest footfalls of a ghost ...' (The exact source of the review isn't given but may be the estimable 'Film Journal', sadly long vanished.)

I cite the above motif from Smith's book both because it gives an insight into the nature of Benny's mental furniture and because it seems to support my intuition about how a certain 'English expressionism' operates in Hitchcock's 1957 film. Those ghostly footsteps say something about the unexamined **inner** life of the film's protagonist called Manny. In turn, they invite our further consideration of the transcendental pretence. If the latter **is** just a pretence, why is it that for some observers artists like Herrmann and Hitchcock really do seem to commune with an 'innate something' that is not the normal self, and what is its relation to notions of the Unconscious? Isn't there indeed room at this point for a trans-personal element to enter the picture?

I've several thoughts on this. First, I don't think it's sufficient explanation to say that Romantics are like children who haven't outgrown the cosy 'individualism' that Jacques Lacan calls the Imaginary (where anything may seem possible) in order to enter into the more restricted, 'socialised' world of mature adults (cf. Lacan's Symbolic) -[4] though that has to be part of the answer. In other words, that such people are merely fooling both themselves and their followers. Second, a masterwork like Hitchcock's and Herrmann's **Vertigo** (1958) contains its own profound questioning (notably, in the character of Scottie) of issues concerning both the transcendental pretence and notions of the self. Third, as Bryan Magee has shown, referring to Wagner (and Schopenhauer), this whole contentious area requires humility because it extends from measurable, phenomenal issues to unknowable, noumenal ones (cf. Kant's thing-in-itself and Lacan's Real).

Speaking of ghosts, then ... many modern philosophers and semiologists contend that there's no ultimate Self and no universal Unconscious - only an endless concatenation of binary opposites that allows the **illusion** of a self.[5] And perhaps any number of other illusions. Even so, let's not forget how notions of both a personal and a 'transcendental' self existed long before Rousseau (e.g. in Eastern thought) - they weren't just an eighteenth century invention. Also, you have to ask: apart from the conscious mind, what holds in suspension and helps keep track of all the binary opposites and/or their related concepts? I fancy that some belief in a (largely unconscious and even in some way a collective) Self may prove to be as insuppressible as speculation about what came before the 'Big Bang'. Of course, Kant's/Schopenhauer's idealist explanation of the mind and its 'categories' should probably remind us that all such speculation is futile. But - the important point here - I don't think that invalidates the **art** of a Herrmann or a Hitchcock.

Neither of those artists claimed to be a philosopher. Rather, their 'expressionist' concerns simply led them to a point where the phenomenal world comes up against the noumenal - whereupon they gave expression to the feelings of mystery and yearning such an encounter nearly always arouses. (Moreover, they did it better than most artists. Parallels drawn by Smith and others between **Vertigo** and Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde' are surely justified, although it's still unclear to me whether such parallels were actually mooted during the making and scoring of the film.) These days you read psychoanalytic theories of music that refer to its evoking the sound of the mother's voice or of the womb, i.e. an Imaginary (or pre-Symbolic) time.[6] Such 'explanations' desist from confronting the noumenal realm, as they steadfastly say nothing about what 'inspires' one artist more than another. Somehow, you feel that they would have aroused nothing but the contempt of Benny Herrmann.

Just occasionally, Smith errs. I spotted the following. Larry Cohen's **It's Alive!** takes an exclamation mark - I put it back when I cited the film before. It's questionable whether a repetitiveness in the score of **Marnie** (1964) prevents it 'from ranking with Herrmann's best work for Hitchcock'; on the contrary, the repetition is most expressive and is linked to Marnie's own repetition-compulsion/death instinct (as briefly analysed in 'MacGuffin' 7).[7] What Smith calls 'the "madhouse" theme' in **Psycho** may indeed hark back to Herrmann's own 1935 'Sinfonietta for Strings' and forward to **Taxi Driver** (1976), as well as echoing the third movement of Bartók's 'Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta' (1936) - but the latter work is **not** alluded to in the **Psycho** novel: the Bartók music that Sam Loomis listens to there is the 'Concerto for Orchestra' (1943). As for Smith's claim that Hitchcock tried to **reduce** Herrmann's **Psycho** fee of $17,500, that contradicts Stephen Rebello's contention in 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' that 'so pleased was the parsimonious director by Herrmann's score that he did the unheard of: he nearly doubled the composer's salary - to $34,501'.

Anyway, the most important thing about 'A Heart at Fire's Centre' (the title comes from the English poet Stephen Spender) is that it gives you a clear picture of both a very gifted, if truculent, man and of his work. And, yes, of a man who still addresses you **through** that work with such directness that - like Rousseau, like Wagner - he seems to call in question how these so-called 'sociopaths' could really be the pretenders our age alleges. I can recommend this book to anyone.

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Notes

1. Robert C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self' (1988), p. 1.

2. B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 334.

3. Solomon, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

4. Steven Connor in his stimulating book 'Charles Dickens' (1985) sees Dickens's later novels as incorporating a tension between Imaginary and Symbolic outlooks. As a result of such tension, Connor suggests, Dickens had to become something of a 'deconstructionist' before his time.

5. Cf. Kaja Silverman: 'we cannot attribute to the unconscious a prelapsarian or "archaic" status; preconscious and unconscious develop through mutual tension, a tension which is introduced through language and which reflects the larger cultural order'. K. Silverman, 'The Subject of Semiotics' (1983), pp. 73-74.

6. For instance, see Claudia Gorbman, 'Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music' (1987), pp. 62-63. 'The mother's voice', Gorbman writes on p. 63, 'is central in constituting the auditory imaginary, before and also after the child's entry into the symbolic. From this - and even from earlier auditory perceptions and hallucinations - musical pleasure may be explained.' Well and good, although I note that this account of the source of music's appeal is relatively unsophisticated in that it doesn't bother to refer to any actual tension between Imaginary and Symbolic or preconscious and unconscious. Gorbman even proceeds to observe that music's 'freedom from linguistic signification and from representation of any kind' renders it able to provide 'easier access to the unconscious' (p. 63). Meanwhile, Schopenhauer's metaphysic of Will (the noumenal) and Representation (the phenomenal), and even his equation of music and Will (see article on **Torn Curtain** in this 'MacGuffin'), look to me to be quite as useful for understanding the art of a Herrmann or a Hitchcock as any single theory going. Frankly, I think Schopenhauer's ideas are superior in that respect.

7. What I should have done in the last 'MacGuffin', but overlooked, was to connect my comments on repetition and death in **Marnie** with my comments on similar matters in **Suspicion** (1941). Both films depict ladies clutching Freudian purses who make repeated efforts to free themselves from the fears that haunt them, but who perhaps never really succeed in their attempts. Note, by the way, that the children's rhyme in **Marnie** about 'the lady with the alligator purse' does indeed represent a child's emancipation from the fear of death, as I pointed out, but that such emancipation is only temporary. So it's perhaps no wonder that Marnie looks enviously/sadly (the look is ambiguous) at the children who sing the rhyme outside her mother's house, which she visits after each of her repeated robbery attempts. Those happily playing children are going to grow up.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The sources of **Vertigo**; Adrian Martin on "'Poor Alex': A Reading of **Notorious**"; book reviews (e.g. 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films'); a new column from Australia; a list of contents for issues 5-8. Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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Not An Editorial

Himself as everything! How does Mrs Fichte put up with it?

- Heinrich Heine

At least one reviewer has found William Rothman's book on Hitchcock ('Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze', 1982) to be absurdly arrogant.[1] But then, I sometimes think it's the logic of Hitchcock's films to practically invite such arrogance. Most obviously, **Vertigo** (1958) addresses itself to the notion that the universe has a key which will unlock all ultimate mysteries, even of life and death. And while common sense tells us that the notion is obviously Romantic, and can therefore be dismissed, it's perhaps more beguiling than we think. For instance, how purely scientific is the current work of US mathematician and cosmologist, Frank Tipler, who is reported to be using computers to simulate the Resurrection of the Dead?[2]

Then again, maybe 'romantic' - small 'r' - comes closer to describing **Vertigo**'s appeal, especially to males. In 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films: From **Rope** to **Vertigo**' (1991) a contributor notes that at Stanford University,

> located as it is in the heart of **Vertigo** country, it has become something of a running joke that virtually all visiting European male academics between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five will at

> some point during their stay express a furtive but burning wish to be taken to see either San Juan Bautista or the Mission Dolores. The proximity of these pilgrimage sites, it always turns out, was a primary reason for their interest in Stanford.[3]

Here's the point I wish to make. Whether your acknowledged main interest in **Vertigo** is philosophic or erotic or something else - perhaps a seemingly simple matter of suspense - your involvement is probably related to what's been called 'the transcendental pretence', and is therefore potentially arrogant. In other words, I'm suggesting that anyone who watches **Vertigo** comes to feel, almost from the credits sequence onwards, that ultimate meaning not only may exist but can be subjectively arrived at.

I can fairly quickly illustrate what I mean. The poet Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834) once penned the line, 'The dread watch-tower of the absolute self'. For comparison, here's how a recent book, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self' (1988) defines a crucial notion in much serious thinking after Descartes: 'the transcendental self was nothing less than God, the Absolute Self, the World Soul'.[4] That is, the transcendental self was the world within, and the transcendental pretence was the assumption that absolute meaning resides there. Accordingly, you can readily see how the church tower which figures so centrally in **Vertigo**, and which the character Scottie finally climbs, may be rather more than a phallic symbol. The tower does have a phallic meaning, but that, I suggest, is mainly because it **subsumes** a whole host of meanings that have been accruing since Scottie started trailing the mysterious Madeleine (later Judy) to parts of San Francisco, including to his own home near Coit Tower - which the screenplay indeed assigns a phallic significance.[5]

* * *

Anyway, let the reader be warned. Your editor is more than likely another arrogant fellow who not only once made his own devout pilgrimage to San Juan Bautista and the Mission Dolores (see 'MacGuffin' 1) but now consistently alludes in these pages to ultimate meaning in various guises - by which I mean entities like Nirvana, Kant's thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer's Will. It's that arrogance (and the propaganda for the transcendental pretence it most likely embodies) that I want to address in the remainder of this article.

Take especially the whole matter of Schopenhauer. Why, if not from arrogance, do I keep riding that apparent hobby-horse of mine in public? In a newsletter about movies? True, our first issue did quote Professor Don Cupitt (BBC-TV) on how Schopenhauer's influence on literature and the cinema has been considerable. And I did remark on that occasion how I felt I had detected many parallels, of both temperament and thought, between Schopenhauer and Hitchcock. Naturally those parallels have taken time to explicate; in fact, there are several more of them featured in this issue.

But I'm not altogether going to deny the implied charge. For reasons going beyond any Schopenhauer-Hitchcock connection, I'm happy to give weight in these pages to a philosopher who figures prominently in the aforementioned book (by Professor Robert Solomon) designed to identify and expose the transcendental pretence. Something tells me that Schopenhauer still sees the world not only more incisively but more 'in broad' than most of us, and that includes most film critics.[6] I especially admire his insistence, tinged with compassion, on the primacy and pervasiveness of suffering, at all levels of the animal kingdom:

> A quick test of the assertion that enjoyment outweighs pain in this world, or that they are at any rate balanced, would be to compare the feelings of an animal eating another with those of the animal being eaten.[7]

It's typical of Schopenhauer to see that. Yet most of us, I'm afraid, tend to deny the fact of such suffering whenever we 'decently' can. As H. L. Mencken once wrote: 'The human mind always tries to expunge the intolerable from memory, just as it tries to conceal it while current.'[8]

But that raises my next point which - please note - brings us back to Hitchcock. For I think similar insights concerning suffering run through many of the director's best films, whether you cite the reverberations of Marion's line in **Psycho** about headaches being like resolutions ('you forget them as soon as they stop hurting'), or the likely avian motivation of **The Birds** (as indicated by the little lecture Hitchcock gives in that film's memorable trailer), or the suggestive 'zoological' motif in **Marnie** (including a reference to the aptly-called 'phatic bugs' which live and die in the shape of a flower to avoid detection

by predatory birds) ... Strangely, though, I've never seen such insights considered when critics have used Hitchcock's work as a basis for their surely lop-sided discussions of cinematic 'pleasure'.

What arrogance is here! I mean mine, of course. Not just because I seem to be snubbing some respected critics but because, perhaps even less forgivably, I appear to think that there's real human content out there and that movies by Hitchcock and others can skin our eyes to it. If that isn't exactly the transcendental pretence, isn't it something at least as old-fashioned? Whatever happened to post-modernism? To notions, both critical and aesthetic, that art is really a non-personal affair?[9]

Still, perhaps the matter's more simple. More like a case of our just trying to see each film in the way its director conceived it. In contrast, I think it's undeniable that **some** Hitchcockian criticism is blinkered or under-informed. As 'MacGuffin' 6 noted of **Rebecca** (1940), at the very moment some (feminist) critics are arguing the significance of camera positions and the like in the boathouse scene, the character Maxim (Laurence Olivier) may be literally getting away with murder. Right under those critics' noses.

Now, speaking of the **Rebecca** article,[10] I did rather leave one point hanging. That was the point about how Maxim and his second wife, the film's narrator whom the script calls 'I', end up 'living a lie **together**'. What I meant was that, in seeming to become fully her husband's partner and equal, 'I' starts to share his guilty secret; the 'lie' is the bland face they must show the world. Mind you, it's not exactly clear how much 'I' knows, for everything is shrouded in ambiguity.

For a start, Maxim does not actually admit to killing Rebecca. He tells 'I' an unlikely account of what had happened which nevertheless allows her to exclaim, almost joyfully, 'it was an accident!' In turn it's not clear how much wilful self-deceit on her part is involved in her acceptance of Maxim's account. (Are we perhaps just seeing more of the same childishness she's displayed all along?)[11] Further, there's considerable doubt about the truth of Maxim's version of Rebecca's character. According to him, she had led a thoroughly debauched and perverted life, even after they were married. On the other hand, what we know of his own character also raises doubt: consider, for instance, his notorious temper, his unbending pride, his sexual strictness (so unlike Rebecca's supposed concupiscence and not so very different from the sexual innocence of 'I').

Apart from all this ambiguity, I find the whole situation Schopenhauerian on at least three counts. First, providing deep background to what happens, is a conception of life as endless suffering. The crowning pitiless touch here is Rebecca's cancer; significantly, we learn of this in almost humbling fashion near the end of the film.[12] Then there's the film's picture of wedded life. While the world had seen Maxim's and Rebecca's marriage as made in Heaven, the reality had been what Maxim calls 'a rotten sham' whose partners blamed each other for their ceaseless mutual dissatisfaction and mutual hostility. Neither of them had apparently been prepared to see the slightest merit in the other's attitude. Maxim had regarded Rebecca as no less than 'the Devil', while presumably she had seen him as hopelessly idealistic and repressed. Equally, each partner had been blind to his or her own demerits ...

But if the first marriage had been a sham, what exactly is the second? I take the fact that both marriages are childless to be a sign both of Maxim's initial guilt and of the continuing element of self-deception. (In the novel, Maxim has indeed killed Rebecca, and I've argued before that the film strongly hints at the same thing; 'I' thereby becomes guilty after the fact.) Now we come to a second Schopenhauerian matter. To speak of self-deception is to be reminded again of how people are prone to deny not just their guilt but also their pain, thus rendering themselves unable to change the basic situation. (Maxim's suicide attempt at the start of the film suggests nothing so much as an aberrant fit of sleepwalking.) This state of affairs, alleviated to some extent by love and compassion, is essentially the perennial human condition. Or, as the film's famous line 'We can never go back to Manderley' implies, Paradise Lost. And most of it is the fruit of human wilfulness or ego.

Yet that last observation raises a third Schopenhauerian matter, even more ironic. For if everything that happens in the world is either the fruit of ego or, seen more broadly, of what Schopenhauer calls sheer blind Will, there's a sense in which 'I' in the film is perfectly right to speak of 'an accident'. Sexuality, temper, pride, self-deception - all these and much else constitute Will or its operations. And Will is at least as ungovernable or unaccountable as the waves that pound the coast near Manderley.

Speaking of which ... it's worth noting how the woman's body washed up at Edgecombe, and which Maxim falsely identifies as Rebecca's, provides the film with at least one image of arbitrary life-and-death worthy of **Vertigo**, which contains several such images.

* * *

So **Rebecca** marks a turning-point in Hitchcock's work, a true deepening of his filmic consciousness, which would stand him in good stead, creatively speaking, for the rest of his career. In particular, the film contains in its portrait of Maxim perhaps Hitchcock's first critique of the transcendental pretence. Consider this further observation by Professor Solomon:

> By about 1805 the self was no longer the mere individual human being, standing with others against a hostile world, but had become all-encompassing ... Even as it signalled a radical egalitarianism, and suggested a long-awaited global sensitivity, [the transcendental pretence] also justified unrestricted tolerance for paternalism and self-righteousness - 'the white philosopher's burden'.[13]

The aristocrat Maxim, who runs his estate with a paternal hand which is sterile - the film strongly implies -[14] is in some ways a dangerous person to know. And, yes, arrogant. Not that he's particularly conscious of the fact. For he's also a man of undoubted good intentions and a debonair manner. Of intelligence and charm.

But then, so is Scottie in **Vertigo**. And **Vertigo**, for all its initial inviting of its audience to share the hero's pursuit of a higher truth, becomes before the end the most devastating of Hitchcock's critiques of the transcendental pretence. Strangely enough, the fact of such a critique makes the film even more Schopenhauerian, not less.[15]

* * *

I'm aware of a seeming paradox here. But, in truth, there's no reason why a practitioner of the transcendental pretence, as Schopenhauer and Hitchcock may both have been, shouldn't sincerely criticise the effects of that pretence. And even doubt the validity of the notion itself. However, taking the latter course of action would certainly not be easy. To even raise the possibility might well seem self-destructive. Dare I suggest that, at some level, that's why Kant had to deem the thing-in-itself unknowable? Why Schopenhauer valued so highly the mediating effect of art? And that all of this is what **Vertigo** is ultimately about?[16]

Of course, I can't properly answer such questions. (In the case of Hitchcock, he protects himself as always by investing his film with the essential ambiguity of 'story-telling', and of images.) But at least I've now explained what's involved in saying that Maxim and 'I' end up 'living a lie together'. At the same time, it's become fairly clear that the feminist critics' charges against the paternalistic Maxim are justified - give or take the character's ambiguity. My principal disagreement with those critics is simply that they seldom show us the broader picture.

Now, I realise that those critics probably don't think such a broader picture is showable, short of embarking on some mammoth feat of deconstruction à la Roland Barthes ('S/Z'). But, as I say, I disagree. For one thing, I think there's a major 'pessimisic' tradition in the arts into which Hitchcock's work can be fitted. (Among the many practitioners in that tradition are Wagner, Conrad and Pirandello.) Related to it is expressionism, which is probably the artistic form most suited to convey both the essence and the appearance of things - what Schopenhauer called, respectively, Will and Representation.

Also, and finally, if there's one other thing 'The MacGuffin' has shown lately, it's this. When you're dealing with a director as sophisticated as Hitchcock, a critic should take more than usual care to first grasp the subtleties and allusions the filmmaker actually intended. Not just because otherwise you may find yourself tripped up. But also because too much emphasis on unintentional meanings and contradictions - again the influence of deconstruction - quickly turns texts into mere imitations of each other. And that has rarely been how audiences have experienced Hitchcock's films. They've always sensed the deeply-felt and witty presence of the man. And promptly forgiven him his arrogance.

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Notes

1. William D. Routt, review of Rothman's 'Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze', in 'Filmviews' 131, Melbourne, Autumn 1987, pp. 36-38.

2. Cf. a note to my article on **Suspicion** in 'MacGuffin' 7 (n.8, p. 20), about a newspaper article which had declared that 'human immortality is actually an item on the speculative scientific agenda these days'.

3. Katie Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror", in W. Raubicheck and W. Srebnick, 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films' (1991), p. 188, n. 9.

4. Robert C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750' (1988), p. 4.

5. The unpublished studio screenplay (Paramount Pictures, 1957) calls Coit Tower 'that remarkable symbol'.

6. Some of Schopenhauer's points in his essay "On Thinking For Yourself" apply as much to film viewers, I suspect, as to readers.

7. A. Schopenhauer, "On the Suffering of the World".

8. Cited in Oliver Sacks, 'Awakenings' (1982), p. 288, n. 8. Even a fine TV programme like 'The Civil War' can barely remind us of the immensity of the phenomenon of suffering as perceived by Schopenhauer. It's all around, and within, us.

9. The notion of a film's - personal - 'tone' applies here. I recall that Robin Wood has somewhere raised that very point in relation to Raymond Bellour's discussion of the 'paternal' professor in **North by Northwest** (1959): Bellour never once pauses to acknowledge the film's implicit criticism of the professor's cynical use of people. I would also mention Professor John Carey's 'The Intellectuals and the Masses' (1992), which criticises the dehumanised view of literature propagated by Derrida et al.

10. It was actually my review of David Bordwell's book, 'Making Meaning', in 'MacGuffin' 6.

11. In particular, there's the moment when, fearful of being chastised by the dreaded Mrs Danvers, 'I' hides the pieces of a broken china Cupid in the back of a drawer.

12. No doubt Mrs Danvers would put a more retributive, almost Old Testament meaning on this final affliction of her beloved Rebecca. Anything than face her own contribution to the world's evil. But she doesn't have that trait to herself in the film.

13. Solomon, op. cit., pp. 4 and 6.

14. This point has been well-covered in recent 'MacGuffins'. For instance, I've mentioned before how Maxim describes his accountant and estate manager, Frank Crawley, as being like 'an old mother hen'. Further implications of sterility are conveyed by the character of Mrs Danvers, who so terrorises 'I' and who, significantly enough, lords it over the domestic staff; and by the initial view 'I' has of Manderley through the car rainshield, which makes the building appear 'spellbound'.

15. The whole ethical side of Schopenhauer's philosophy amounts to a critique of unregenerate human nature, including therefore the effects on the individual and on others of any 'pretence', transcendental or otherwise. Mind you, in view of the point I make at the end of the next paragraph (in the text), and in the next note (n. 16, below), it's worth recalling that even Schopenhauer consoled himself from time to time with a reminder of how 'it's no more necessary for a philosopher to be a saint than it is for a saint to be a philosopher'.

16. Hitchcock once told a BBC interviewer that 'reality is something none of us can stand, at any time'.

BLOOPERS

There were about the usual number of misspellings and related slips in 'MacGuffin' 7. I'm no Latin scholar, so although the character Johnnie in **Suspicion** should have been called a **puer aeternus** (incidentally, a Jungian term), he got dubbed something slightly different. Nor, apparently, am I much good at French, and the Grande Corniche in **To Catch a Thief** had the feminine 'e' missing from its first word.

Now for the big one. I claimed that the neon profile of Hitchcock seen momentarily through a window in **Rope** was the original of the director's caricature-image that became so familiar to viewers of his '50s and '60s TV shows. In fact, John Russell Taylor, in his official biography, 'Hitch, points out that Hitchcock started doing the caricature of himself back in the '20s (p. 230). Mea culpa - and I trust that's spelt correctly.

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Submission, containment, liberation: Hitchcock's 'Torn Curtain' (1966)

Michael tried to determine what his own attitude would be if this were America; would he be more willing to risk his life for fellow Americans than for foreigners?
Probably, he thought. Undoubtedly Russians thought more of Russians than they did of East Germans or Poles; it was hopelessly built into the human frame, and too damned bad, but what were you going to do?

- Richard Wormser, 'Torn Curtain' (based on a screenplay by Brian Moore): the bus sequence[1]

For the world is Hell, and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it.

- Arthur Schopenhauer, "On the Suffering of the World"[2]

In **Buddhism** the world arises as a consequence of an inexplicable clouding of the heavenly clarity of ... Nirvana after a long period of quietude. Its origin is thus ... fundamentally to be understood in a moral sense, notwithstanding the case has an exact analogy in the ... origin of the sun in an inexplicable primeval streak of mist.

- Ibid

Torn Curtain begins as follows. The screen swirls with grey mist. Electronic rumblings are heard. Out of the mist emerges a spurt of flame. The screen divides,[3] so that the flame burns sun-like on the left and, on the right, a succession of faces is seen as if through the mist.[4] The main-titles music starts up - a lurching yet urgent theme of horns and xylophones. The flame and the faces fade. The grey mist still swirls. The view dissolves - and the music segues - to the start of the film proper. We see a grey ship proceeding through a grey and misty Norwegian fjord ...

Two hours later the film ends on a downbeat note with another grey image, an image of the two principals (Paul Newman, Julie Andrews) huddled for warmth beneath a blanket. Now, given that none of the faces during the credits sequence shows much sign of happiness, and that several show actual suffering, you would expect the film proper to be downbeat, too. And that's how it is. With perhaps one notable exception, all the film's characters seem joyless. Accordingly, an interpretation of the credits sequence might have it that it starts by showing the birth of a universe, then proceeds to represent what both Buddhism and Hinduism (and some early Greek faiths) call the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Note the idea of recurrence implicit in the image of the wheel - and a possible counterpart in the film's recurring use of grey.

The exceptional character I mentioned who appears happier than everyone else is Professor Gustav Lindt (Ludwig Donath), a self-described 'genius'. Specifically, he's an aging nuclear physicist who clearly enjoys - in two senses - a unique status on the staff at the University of Leipzig in East Germany. A key

scene has him instructing his young opposite number from the US, the apparent defector Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman), in some recondite aspects of missile propulsion. 'Learn!' he insists, with almost God-like authority. (Little does he know that Armstrong has actually come to steal one of his secrets.)[5] But then, Hitchcock's geniuses are invariably exceptional. The artist in **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) lives happily in backwater New England and couldn't care less about what city-people think of his work.[6] He goes ahead regardless and paints his colourful canvases, one of which depicts, as he says, 'the beginning of the world'.

* * *

More elaborate interpretations of the credits sequence may grow out of the one I've given. Allowing that the faces on screen-right represent 'sorrowful' human life, what story do they tell? Here's what we actually see: a couple making love; a watching eye; a succession of male and female faces, either contorted or impassively observing; finally, the distressed face of Sarah Sherman (the Julie Andrews character) plummeting away from us. In broad terms, the answer to my question about what story these faces tell could be given as one of Will (life-force) and Representation (appearance) - here note two inseparable concepts of Arthur Schopenhauer, which I think provide the key to the film. The left of screen depicts singular Will, symbolised by the sun; the right of screen depicts life's variegated Representation, the human condition. Fittingly, composer John Addison's main-titles theme begins only when the faces start appearing. The full significance of this becomes more overt later when the same galumphing music recurs during the bus sequence, a sequence which again emphasises human diversity.

In less broad terms, those faces invite a further Schopenhauerian reading. For what we see (after the initial love-making, which somehow seems to cause what follows) are 'tormented souls' (the increasingly desperate, contorted faces) and 'devils' (the impassive watchers). Implicit in this concept is how members of both groups will soon enough find themselves swapping places. In short, what we see is a depiction of Hell on Earth.

That leaves the image of a darting eye. The image is at once ambiguous and, I think, over-determined. It might be thought of as both a literal sign of life and as implying a destructive force. It finds its reciprocal image at the end of the sequence, in the shot of a woman apparently falling to her death.

By the same token, that ambiguous eye anticipates how in the film proper there are just two - opposed - close-ups of eyes. The first such shot shows Michael's eye when he is being examined by a doctor in the Leipzig University clinic. His ministering angel is, in fact, the worthy Dr Koska (Gisela Fischer), a member of the escape organisation known as 'Pi', whose husband has already died for the cause.[7] Thus, by association, what we see is a 'good' eye, a symbol of hope. In contrast, the second close-up is of a 'bad' eye: it belongs to the vindictive ballerina (Tamara Toumanova) who is playing a creature from Hell in a performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Francesca da Rimini'. (I've been using Hitchcock's own terminology here. In the bus sequence there are actually two buses. The first of these Hitchcock called the 'good' bus, its pursuer he called the 'bad' bus.)

* * *

Torn Curtain owes something to Fritz Lang's **Cloak and Dagger** (1946) whose physicist hero joins the wartime secret service and is sent to Germany to interview a kidnapped scientist. Equally, it depicts a new Cold War scepticism, to be seen in novels like John Le Carré's 'The Spy Who Came In From the Cold' (filmed in 1966 by Martin Ritt) and movies like Raoul Lévy's **The Defector** (1966). In Hitchcock's case, he quickly decided that his defector would be a bogus one, and that Armstrong's trip behind the Iron Curtain to try and obtain vital information relating to his stalled Gamma Five project would comprise little more than the film's MacGuffin. Much more important would be the emotional effect of Michael's actions on Sarah, his fiancée.

But even here Hitchcock had obviously done his background research. He remembered the Burgess-MacLean spy case in England and asked himself how the (non-existent) Mrs Burgess would have felt on hearing that her husband had turned up in Russia. As for the idea of Gamma Five, here the film scored a coup. Years ahead of the US Government's official Star Wars project, the film propounds the idea of an 'anti-missile missile'

system. Probably the idea came indirectly from famous physicist Edward Teller, a real-life proponent of such a system, who in 1935 had fled his alma mater at Leipzig University to work in America.

Other precedents for **Torn Curtain** are to be found in Hitchcock's own work. **The Secret Agent** (1936) showed a reluctant amateur spy dispatched on a possibly murderous mission. **Lifeboat** (1943) seemed to advocate an ethics that is mindful both of our common humanity and of our human diversity, adding a caution concerning its characters' too-narrow views. Its ambiguous villain was a distinctly 'Nietzschean' character called Willy ...

* * *

I've mentioned the inseparable nature of the concepts of Will (in the Schopenhauerian sense, not the Nietzschean) and Representation. Dr Oliver Sacks was paraphrasing Schopenhauer when he said that to speak in terms of either concept alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of building a meaningful world.[8] This, I take it, amounts to an exhortation to be both subjective and objective at the same time. To live in the world yet remain apart from it, so to speak. However, for most of us, if we think of such matters at all, we are conscious mainly of having failed. We find that what Buddhists call 'the veil of Maya' (illusion) has clouded our vision and we have been forced into error. Certainly when Michael Armstrong penetrates the Iron Curtain, he (at best) only partially penetrates the veil of Maya ...

The early scenes of **Torn Curtain** are about Representation - largely divorced from a sense of Will and therefore depicted as literally superficial. Soon after Michael and Sarah arrive by ship in Copenhagen, the possibility of a united humankind, i.e. one without destructive duality, is raised in suitably quixotic fashion. Someone comments that the Hotel d'Angleterre is a Danish hotel whose French name means the Hotel of England. And staying at the hotel, adding its own Babel of tongues, is an international congress of physicists. Fortunately the congress members have their own common language - which nevertheless sets them apart - in the language of mathematics. But the film is at pains to remind us that their language has Greek origins (or, at any rate, draws on such Greek letters as 'pi' and 'gamma').[9]

The Copenhagen scenes are the film's most colourful and lively. But again English composer Addison's music tells us how best to read the film's intentions. He allows the music to imitate the theme-accompaniment from one of J. Arthur Rank's more trite programme-fillers, the 'Look at Life' documentaries. The title logo of that popular series showed a colourful rooster with vari-coloured tail feathers, and it carried a sub-title, 'This Colourful World'. But, as I say, the series **was** trite.

* * *

Now, the veil of Maya never gets to be fully lifted in this phenomenal world of ours. Hitchcock kept faith with such a notion by having his cinematographer John Warren shoot the entire film through a grey gauze. On the other hand, it's most pertinent to **Torn Curtain** to recall that Schopenhauer allowed that there might be at least two ways for us to learn something of the Will and its attendant 'truths'. One way involves our inner awareness of our own bodies, through which the Will flows. In times of exceeding good health, or exceeding poor health, we may be particularly conscious of the Will inside us.[10] The second way is that of art (and its analogues, e.g. certain forms of meditation). Of music, Schopenhauer said boldly that it **is** Will; of the other aesthetic forms (e.g. fine art, literature, sculpture), he said that they somehow make the Will more objectively accessible - here he evoked Plato's Ideas. And he implied how all art involves a temporary dissolution of the individual ego in order that the more objectified knowledge may enter. As for science, Schopenhauer felt that it could deal only with the phenomenal world.

How, then, should we respond to Michael's 'defection' speech on his arrival in East Germany, in which he says his 'work is more important than any personal considerations of loyalty to any one country'? Is this where impersonal truth, truth which may bring about a united humankind, is vested?

Fairly obviously, no. At best, the speech offers a **negative** guarantee about the future: if Michael's and Lindt's work is successful, it may ensure that humanity **doesn't** blow itself up. In any case, the presence of smug officials and a large media contingent should alert us to how the occasion is one of Representation

ahead of Will, i.e. where the true nature of Will has been suppressed as far as possible. On show is the phoney world of political speechifying, whose language falsely promises Nirvana or a new Golden Age.[11] As Schopenhauer could have pointed out, what is involved is the politicians' and even the scientists' perversion of the will-to-power for their own ends. (In this special application of his insight concerning the nature of Will, Schopenhauer anticipated Nietzsche. But Schopenhauer, let's note, detested Will which he knew to be both amoral and blind.) Significantly, Michael is lying when he announces his defection; and his underlying motive is a selfish one, concerning the cutting off by Washington of funds for his ailing research.

* * *

I'm about to describe the film's murder scene which, I'll argue, is designed to make us feel the nature of Will. (Later I'll describe the bus sequence with its emphasis on Representation.) For now, it's time to say something about Michael's Communist bodyguard Gromek (Wolfgang Kieling). He's a doughty little fellow, one of the film's many battlers.[12] True, he has acquired some unfortunate Americanisms, like his habit of chewing gum; and all his talk of having once lived in New York is certainly a sham. Even so, it's surely rather loose of critic Robin Wood to call him a 'lost soul'.

If the film had managed to include a key scene, soon after the murder, in which Michael encounters Gromek's twin brother at a workers' factory, we'd have learnt that Gromek had been an ordinary family man with wife and kids and holiday snaps to show for it. (The scene was shot, and provides the basis for a memorable episode remaining in the novel.) In other words, we would have learnt that Gromek had been not so very different from the pious 'Manny' Balestrero in **The Wrong Man** (1957). If that sounds implausible, consider the following. In analysing **The Wrong Man** in 'MacGuffin' 6, I pointed out that Manny never really comprehends the forces that shape him. No more does Gromek. That's suggested in the small matter of how he never masters the operation of his (American?) cigarette lighter. But also in a further item that confused the 'Newsweek' film reviewer. 'Gromek', the reviewer scoffed, 'says he used to live on 88th Street and Eighth Avenue, but there is no such address in Manhattan.'[13] Quite so. Gromek's information about America has been obtained solely from the American movies and radio shows that he had been exposed to in spy school. (Cf. the novel, pp. 47, 77.) What he hasn't realised is that movies don't always tell the whole truth.

But then, movies are all Representation and little or no Will. And Gromek, like Manny, neglects to leaven the former with a touch of the latter. (Intuition? Insight? Compassion?)[14] There's another, related similarity between the two films. Manny in **The Wrong Man** has a 'double' and several look-alikes (see 'MacGuffin' 6). **Torn Curtain** goes even further. Various characters are doubled, and there are several sets of twins (e.g. the two Gromeks). Even the good bus and the bad bus are twins, when you think about it. Now, the doubling in **The Wrong Man** implies a certain invisible interconnectedness of lives and fates which I've previously suggested is Dickensian - but which is unavailable to Manny as a lasting insight. In the case of **Torn Curtain**, the doubling is especially apposite. For again it stresses the idea of humanity's interconnectedness, its oneness, which this time seems as if it might extend beyond the grave.

* * *

Any discussion of the murder scene should embrace the haunting 'echoing footsteps' scene in the museum, which immediately precedes it. The two scenes are really one, in much the same way as an 'echoing footsteps' episode in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956) relates integrally, if in more humorous vein, to the free-for-all in a taxidermist's workshop which follows.

Michael visits the museum to try and elude Gromek. The setting figures naturally in the story inasmuch that East Berlin is noted for its fine museums; what we see here is the Berlin Museum. Significantly, the scene is introduced by an exterior view from a tourist-information brochure, followed by a dissolve which effectively allows Michael to walk into the photograph. (He's about to leave behind, perhaps for good, the superficiality of earlier scenes.) The Graeco-Roman facade dwarfs him, but the effect is accentuated once he enters the building. A high long-shot shows him crossing a tiled floor inlaid with a magnificent mandala. In the middle of this he suddenly pauses, listening. All around him are classical columns, although the museum seems strangely deserted of people.

Actually, the scene has another precedent, or rather two, for it combines aspects of the art gallery and Muir Woods scenes from **Vertigo** (1958). They, too, intimated some sobering thoughts about art and mortality. However, to pass now from the sublime to the mundane, I have to report that I'm unsure if the view we see here is authentic, i.e. based on an actual Berlin Museum interior. An article in 'American Cinematographer'[15] discloses the astonishing fact that only the floor of the film's museum was 'real', and that all the rest of the shot was a matte-painting. You guess that Hitchcock would have insisted on absolute truth-to-life. Yet, concerning the columns, it's just possible that either the filmmaker or his art director, Hein Heckroth,[16] was inspired by some separate memory of old Berlin, e.g. of the famous Hall of Pillars in Berlin Castle (demolished in 1950).

Of course, what most matters is the statement the scene makes. When Michael pauses at the very centre of the mandala, the moment combines classic German Expressionism with equally classic Jungian and Buddhist-Hindu symbolism. Not that Michael is aware of any of this - he only has eyes and ears for his possible pursuer. In effect, the moment is meant for us. Nevertheless, it suggests our equivocal hero's need to look at himself, to judge what he sees (German Expressionism) and to begin to achieve an integration of ego and deep, even collective, unconscious (Jung). This interpretation is fully commensurate with Schopenhauerian principles. But the fact that the museum is virtually deserted suggests that people in this part of the world, no less than in the flashier Copenhagen scenes, [17] may not be in tune with such matters at present. At least, not in any contemplative way. Meanwhile, the museum performs its function of preserving part of our cultural and human heritage. Interestingly, its statues and sculptures seem to portray mainly figures of Graeco-Roman mythology, in alternating black and white marble, and to tell a similar story of struggle to that of the film's credits ...

Suspecting he is being followed, Michael keeps turning corners à la **Vertigo** (the Muir Woods scene, et al.), then stopping to try and identify the sound of footsteps echoing on the stone floor. Finally he leaves by a (strangely unsupervised) side door, still uncertain of where Gromek may be.

In the street, a housewife trudges by. A fragment of skyline shows typical East Berlin war ruins. Needing to hurry to an assignation outside the city with his 'Pi' contact, Michael takes a taxi. The driver has what the novel calls 'an incurious, pleasantly stupid face' (p. 69). He wears a pale open-necked shirt, making him an older version of the 'demure' and 'mild' identical twins we'll later see on the bus (pp. 149-50). Michael feels in luck.

* * *

There are no echoing tile floors at the farm where Michael arrives by taxi. He's met by a pleasant **frau** (Carolyn Conwell) in an apron. With his shoe he draws the 'Pi' sign in the farmyard dirt - in effect, a triple reminder (though not intentional on his part) of the basis of the Graeco-Roman culture he's just seen: linguistic, mathematical, demotic ... The woman points to a field where her husband is driving a tractor.

The farmer (Mort Mills) is described in the novel by one of his 'Pi' colleagues as, simply, 'the finest' of men (p. 176). In the film he's represented by the actor who played the highway patrolman in **Psycho** (1960), and commands a voice like that of Physics Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg. (The novel, though, gives him an accent that is 'pure lower-class Southern', hinting that he's a former American Serviceman - p. 71.) His hearty first line both makes a vital plot point and is suitably thematic: 'Well, Professor Armstrong, how does it feel to play the part of a dirty defector?'

Both the farmer and his wife have their 'doubles'. The moustached farmer is a more robust version of Michael's Copenhagen contact, the bookstore proprietor named Freddy. And the farmer's wife strikingly resembles another brave 'Pi' member, Dr Koska at the University of Leipzig. The truth is that Michael himself is one of the few characters in the film who lacks a physical double. But the reason for this, I suggest, isn't that he's played by the inimitable Paul Newman. More likely, it's because, in the film's terms, he has failed to achieve a suitable merger with society, especially the demos, a merger which the film is now increasingly going to insist on. For instance, it's about to deprive him of his distinctive overcoat ...[18]

As the farmer drives Michael back towards the farmhouse, the 'Pi' music starts up. Michael dismounts and the farmer deftly - virilely - swings the tractor round and returns to work. Nearby are the remnants of an outhouse wall. Walls have already figured prominently in the film, either as divisive **new** walls which serve as ironic reminders of the one between East and West Berlin, or as war ruins.[19] For the moment, Michael probably feels he's far from all that.

So when the 'Pi' music ends with an abrupt crash, the arrival of Gromek is doubly jolting. Moreover, the little fellow has put himself between Michael and the waiting taxi, and Michael must duck into the farmhouse. Quickly Gromek follows him. The ensuing scene is played without music.

Music would be redundant, and distracting, in a scene which Hitchcock said he designed 'to show how hard it is to kill a man'. The scene builds slowly at first. Inside the farmhouse, watched by the woman, Gromek has got Michael cornered. He soon shows he can get tough when he jabs at Michael's coat with an accusing fist - and in an example of 'subjective' style[20] the film jabs **us** by excising a few frames from the middle of each shot. But next minute he's cracking jokes, speculating that Michael is headed for 'the Big House' as in certain Edward G. Robinson prison movies.[21]

Gromek also appears to have read some of the American press reviews of **The Birds** and **Marnie**. ('It's strictly for the boids. You still say that.') The poor fellow virtually asks to be dispatched, like some stand-up comedian who has outstayed his welcome. I don't think I'm being callous in claiming this; at some level, the audience surely feels the working of just such a crazy logic as I'm implying. Compelled to watch a protracted and messy killing, we need to find something to laugh at. Of course, Hitchcock compounds the effect in various ways. Just to list what happens shows one of them: Gromek dies from a combination of a saucepan of scalding soup thrown in his face, a kitchen knife embedded in his shoulder, blows to his shins delivered with the edge of a spade, and finally asphyxiation in a gas oven. Only unexceptional, homely implements are used, notice.[22]

But Michael has got blood on his hands. And on his coat. Now he really is 'dirty'. And his shocked face clearly shows the sort of dissolution of ego Schopenhauer spoke of (albeit with less drastic circumstances in mind). Above all, for the scene's participants, as well as for the audience, what Schopenhauer meant by Will has here been made virtually palpable. (As I say, though, music wasn't called for. Music may indeed be Will, but by that very fact is invisible.)[23] In the rest of this article we must look at how the film applies the knowledge of Will to its ensuing scenes, especially the scene on the bus, and at how it works to convey its enriched insight to us, the audience.

* * *

Something else that Hitchcock remarked about the murder scene is revealing. He fully intended, he said, that the death of a man from asphyxiation in a gas oven should evoke Auschwitz. So far as I know, he didn't say **why** he intended it, but we may guess. Probably he was remembering how it was in just such tranquil surroundings as those of this German farm that some of the extermination camps operated. Further, we know that in 1945 Hitchcock was summoned by his friend Sidney Bernstein and the British Ministry of Information to supervise and edit footage of the camps. As the film flooded in, he could hardly bear to watch it.[24]

When Michael and Sarah escape from Leipzig to East Berlin, they do so on a 'Pi' bus which passes itself off as the route's regular bus. In charge of the escape is the Jew, Mr Jacobi (David Opatoshu). It's his quick-thinking which at one point saves the couple from being recognised by searching police; and his coolness which prevents dissenting voices among the bus passengers, including an hysterical **fräulein**'s, from erupting into disaster. Connotations of concentration camps and of the Occupation (cf. **The Diary of Anne Frank**) are strong here, too.

However, a further connotation stresses the scene's element of diversity, its mix of people. Jacobi himself is another of the film's doubles: with his goatee, he resembles Professor Lindt. And although nearly all the passengers on the bus are members of 'Pi', they're a motley lot. They include a little man with a cold, a student and his girlfriend, a set of identical twins, and the hysterical Fräulein Mann. In short, they collectively resemble groups encountered in at least two other Hitchcock films having a pro-democracy message, the 1942 **Saboteur** (with its bizarre circus troupe) and **Lifeboat**. They are all ordinary-enough

people, and for that reason represent those from whom Michael and Sarah have been shielded in an ivory-tower existence back in Washington. (With particular irony, Sarah in the novel is a Senator's daughter - p. 53.)[25]

Now, both the film and the novel are ambivalent about 'Pi'. Given a naturally divisive, and already divided, humanity, it's clear that an organisation like 'Pi' can't do much about the fundamental problem. Besides, its members are as capable of dissension and limited thinking as anyone. The novel calls some of the bus passengers both 'nice' and 'well-meaning' (p. 149) - a likely allusion to Carol Fisher's 'well-meaning' but ineffectual Peace Party in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940). On the other hand, as all these earlier Hitchcock films stress, it's almost a necessity that you eventually make a stand for what you believe in. Arguably, **Torn Curtain** doesn't disagree with that, but it does emphasise the need for wisdom. Through the characters of Michael and Sarah, it comes to focus on the need to integrate public action and private insight, and in the process to fuse knowledge of Will and of Representation.

As the film progresses, Michael increasingly questions the nature of appearances, and not just from a scientist's perspective. On the whole, he becomes more pessimistic. Note, for example, the quotation from the novel at the head of this article. Though the passengers on the bus represent demos, they also resemble the audience watching the film; and one of the characteristics of a film audience is that its members may seem a cohesive unit but really aren't, certainly not once the house-lights return. Of course, most of us are stimulated by group company. So it's understandable that the bus passengers see fit to applaud their collective performance. That moment gives us one of the film's few fleeting warm spots.

Also, we naturally trust that Michael and Sarah will always be grateful to 'Pi' for showing that a purely logical outcome of human selfishness (or Will), i.e. finding oneself in the cold, may sometimes be confounded by an equally human inconsistency (which we may call fellow-feeling). I'm not sure that Schopenhauer sufficiently acknowledged such a possibility, but then his attention was focussed on both broader and more individual tendencies. Moreover, the film, with its downbeat ending, soon reverts to an almost equally gloomy outlook. Yet the bus sequence (and the twins/doubles motif) has left us this clear message. We're all both like and unlike each other. Each of the passengers on the bus is both universal Will **and** individual 'will' - in the latter case, sometimes inconveniently or irritatingly so. In turn, such a situation carries an ethical imperative for anyone who can sufficiently penetrate the veil of Maya to see that Representation isn't everything.

* * *

Michael and Sarah are promptly tested on how well they have learnt the lessons of the bus sequence. Few people could appear potentially more inconvenient or irritating than the scatty Countess Kuchinska, who approaches the American couple in the street. She's a displaced person, a former Polish aristocrat, though it's not inappropriate that she's played by Russian-French actress Lila Kedrova fresh from an Academy Award-winning performance in Michael Cacoyannis's **Zorba the Greek** (1964). In the **Torn Curtain** novel the Countess proclaims, 'I am an old woman. But there is **la vie** left in me. Lots of **la vie**' (p. 168). The film signals as much by giving her a garish multi-coloured scarf. Now, it would be easy for Michael and Sarah to dismiss her as of no more consequence to them than one of the tourists back in Copenhagen - in effect, their own former selves. But that would be seeing only half the picture.

Mind you, the situation is highly ambiguous. The Countess, it happens, can direct the couple to their next contact-point, the Friedrichstrasse Post Office. Also, for reasons of her own, she's not averse to employing a spot of blackmail, for she hopes that Michael and Sarah may sponsor her to the United States. In short, she's like everyone else in having a selfish side. Her double is Michael's nemesis-figure, the ballerina, inasmuch that both of those rather theatrical ladies wants her place in the sun; for the ballerina, that largely means the spotlight of public acclaim,[26] for the Countess it means somewhere to enjoy her remaining **vie**. Before the end, though, the film will have implied that both ambitions are by themselves inadequate. Meanwhile, Michael and Sarah agree to the Countess's deal.

* * *

Another test comes when the couple seek to make their final 'Pi' contact by attending an evening at the

ballet. The scene was shot on the set where **The Phantom of the Opera** had been filmed twice (in 1925 and 1943); film buffs may also detect in the scene allusions to such classic movies as **The Red Shoes** (1948) and **Hangover Square** (1944). With State Security closing in, some bravura gesture seems called for. Michael provides it when he turns the on-stage artifice to his own purpose with an inspired shout of 'Fire!', causing a general panic in which he and Sarah manage to escape. The stage flames, depicting Hell, neatly combine the film's symbol of Will (life-energy)[27] with what is patently Representation. By being able to merge - or rather, separate - the two aspects in his mind, Michael may be said to pass this test, too.

* * *

But perhaps the final emphasis of the present article should be on the fact of the successive tests themselves. I've always thought of **Torn Curtain** as giving Michael and Sarah (and the audience) an initiation into deeper knowledge. My early notes on the film, made about the time I saw it on its first release, include a definition of initiation as a three-stage process: 'a rite of submission, followed by a period of containment, and then by a further rite of liberation'. Regrettably, I've no record of the source of that quotation. But it's likely that it came from Jung or one of his followers. Certainly Jung's 'Man and His Symbols' (1964) had recently been published in London - moreover, it's the sort of book Hitchcock himself might have consulted -[28] and it contained similar points.[29] As well, it carried Jung's keynote comment about how the world had become 'dissociated like a neurotic, with the Iron Curtain marking the symbolic line of division'.

Accordingly, I think we may sum up **Torn Curtain** as follows. The film is suggesting that the veil of Maya will continue to screen the heavenly clarity of Nirvana from us for some time yet. Equally, there can be no early prospect of one united humankind. All the more reason, then, why each of us should give thought to plotting our particular **inward** path. We may find there many of the sources of our problems. And not the least of those problems may simply be one of getting started. In Michael Armstrong's case, his inward journey appears to begin in a well-known fashion when he suffers a career setback (the halting of his Gamma Five project) which in turn affects his sense of self-esteem.

It's worth specifying the more obvious areas where Michael's perceptions are going to be altered or enlarged. For a start, both the museum and ballet scenes have hinted at how insulated from cultural matters, and the humanities generally, he has been. Near the end of the novel he muses that when he gets back home, 'he must make a point of broadening himself, going to ballet and maybe opera and reading some novels' (p. 177). Similarly, the scenes where he must literally make contact with ordinary people (the farm, the factory canteen, the bus) show how shielded from the roots of democracy his career has made him. The word 'democracy' is Greek-derived: from 'demos', the people, and 'kratos', strength. Yet if Michael knows anything at all of his Greek heritage, you feel that his knowledge relates just to his specialist fields of mathematics and physics. As for his relation to the natural world (represented by the Norwegian fjord, the farm, and finally the open sea), clearly that has also been largely off-limits for him. Sarah implies no less when she chides him in Copenhagen, 'A scientist is supposed to respect a natural order in all things'.

Now, there seems to be three ways in which Michael and Sarah undergo a process of submission/containment/liberation. In a very broad sense, they do so as the rest of us do it, by being born and entering on the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Less broadly, they undertake such a process when they go behind the Iron Curtain, experience various tests and perils there, and then effect their escape (in the end, by swimming to safety from an East German ship, which reminds more than one commentator of 'traversing ... the river Styx').[30] But even individual scenes pointedly follow the same pattern. The essential element of containment is stressed in the murder scene (the tightly-closed windows), the blackboard sequence in Professor Lindt's underground workroom, the bus sequence (although Fräulein Mann has to be expelled from the vehicle before the journey's end), and the ballet scene where armed Volpos arrive to guard each exit. And in case we've failed to spot the motif already, Hitchcock has Michael and Sarah finally smuggled out of the country in costume baskets belonging to the ballet company, on a ship bound for Sweden.

It comes to this. One of Jung's colleagues, Joseph L. Henderson, says that the purpose of initiation rites is always 'to create the symbolic mood of death from which may spring the symbolic mood of rebirth'.[31] Michael Armstrong is subjected to a succession of deaths and rebirths, each time having his eyes opened a little further to the - often Hellish but also grand - scheme of things, even as he and Sarah learn a new

humility which leaves them each other but not much more. Yet, precisely as a result, the two of them can huddle thankfully at last beneath the grey blanket provided by the Swedish assistant harbourmaster (who adds a further humbling perspective by noting, 'We keep a whole stack of blankets for refugees').

* * *

I've my own thoughts on why **Torn Curtain** doesn't work as well as it might have, although they've little to do with Donald Spoto's suggestion that the film has 'dated hopelessly since [the events of] 1990'. In general, it's just too downbeat and even cerebral for audiences to bear, and not sufficiently romantic.[32] And here's a fairly specific instance. Michael never makes more common cause with other people than when at the ballet he looks at the stage flames and yells 'Fire!', thus prompting a latent fear - of any audience indoors - to erupt in onscreen panic. Of course, he's not really making common cause with the audience at all, and that fact already works against the scene's full effectiveness. Even so, I've suggested that thematically the concept is promising. What's most wrong with it, I think, is the apparent basic stolidity of Paul Newman's character from the start. By contrast, his shout of 'Fire!' shows real wit, albeit of a dramatic life-and-death kind. Accordingly, the scene needed a Cary Grant, in a film like **North by Northwest** (1959), to make it believable. More generally, you could say that Michael is consistently too bland a character to excite strong viewer-feelings, whether of identification/admiration or of sardonic appraisal (as I believe Hitchcock at one stage intended).[33]

Likewise, Julie Andrews is wasted if not unconvincing. Significantly, her strongest scene entails her thirty seconds of silence in the Leipzig University lecture room after Professor Lindt has asked her about the outcome of Gamma Five. (Her eventual, guarded answer: 'I have nothing to say.') Another of the Americans' minders, Professor Karl Manfred (Gunter Strack), clearly fancies her; and there seems to have been some attempted seduction by Manfred while Michael was at the farm. On Michael's return from there, he's summoned by Gerhard (Hansjöerg Felmy) of State Security and told that Sarah has been persuaded to come over to the Communists. It appears that Manfred possesses a 'unique line in argument', one which combines 'mathematical logic and romantic inconsistency' (yet that's something the film comes close to advocating we all follow).[34] Moreover, Manfred remains possessive towards Sarah, at Leipzig even taking it upon himself to answer when Lindt asks a question of Michael, 'Have you your assistant [i.e. Sarah] with you?' Of course, all of this is resolved immediately afterwards in the controversial hillock scene (which I find tacky), but my point is that Sarah's big moments are either static or coy or take place off-screen.

Finally, Hitchcock was surely right when he once said of his brand of thriller, 'The better the villain, the better the picture'. Unfortunately, the overt **villainy** in **Torn Curtain** is entirely conceptual - a matter of ideology - and I have real difficulty in thinking of its nominal **villains** - Gromek, Manfred, Gerhard - as anything but generally likable, and subject to the same Will as the rest of us. No doubt, most of this was intended by Hitchcock, but what does it do to the dynamics of his film?

* * *

Postscript. More about the grey blanket that ends the film. That image goes all the way back to **Number 17** of 1932 (see 'MacGuffin' 5) via **Psycho** (see 'MacGuffin' 4). Of course, it signifies coming out of the cold. But equally, and quite literally in **Torn Curtain**, it signifies turning one's back on the world. Interesting, therefore, that the **happiest** character in the film is so decidedly Professor Lindt, ensconced behind the Iron Curtain, which is also grey. But then, as we saw, he's a self-described 'genius', like the painter in **The Trouble With Harry**. And as Schopenhauer reminds us, only the genius, the artist and the saint regularly penetrate the veil of Maya which so baffles everyone else. As I see the matter, the one optimistic connotation of the blanket which Michael and Sarah draw around themselves is this : like the word 'couple', it makes duality one.

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Notes

1. The novel was published in 1966 to coincide with the release of the film. It appears to adhere closely

to the original screenplay, i.e. pre-dating the film's last-minute modifications. I consider it an authentic, and useful, research tool for scholars of the film, and quote from it several times during the present article.

2. This particular version of Schopenhauer's essay appears in A. Schopenhauer, 'Essays and Aphorisms', translated and selected by R. J. Hollingdale (1970).

3. Without ever actually becoming a split-screen, i.e. the action is assigned merely to two distinct areas.

4. I recall that Hitchcock obtained the shot of the flame after learning that a rocket-base was going to burn off a million dollars' worth of excess fuel, and he obtained permission to send along a camera crew.

5. Several times the film evokes myth, especially Greek myth. Here you naturally think of Prometheus's successful attempt to steal fire from the gods and give it to humankind.

6. His 'genius', too, is of the self-described kind. I've discussed the 'genius' theme in Hitchcock's films before, e.g. in my article on **Psycho** ('MacGuffin' 4).

7. See the novel, p. 132.

8. O. Sacks, 'Awakenings' (revised edition, 1982), p. 219.

9. The novel contains a significant piece of dialogue when an impatient Professor Lindt mocks his colleagues' dithering. '"The day has come [he says] when our universities are staffed from the barnyard. Pigs teach Greek, horses teach German, and chickens teach physics. A great age."' (p. 108) He sounds a bit like the (mock-Byronic) figure of Sir Humphrey Pengallan in **Jamaica Inn** (1939) ...

10. This observation is mine, not Schopenhauer's, but I think it suitably conveys his meaning.

11. Shortly before Hitchcock's film was made, Carl Jung had observed that the Communist world had one big myth, 'the time-hallowed archetypal dream of a Golden Age (or Paradise)'. But he was quick to add that the Western world, too, was 'in the grip of the same mythology'. See C. G. Jung (ed.), 'Man and His Symbols' (1964), p. 85. Certainly the film implies something of this idea by shooting several of the East German scenes, in particular, in a honey-coloured oblique sunlight. Perhaps equally, you sense an affinity with George Orwell's 'Nineteen eighty-four' (1949) with its oppressive regime and, initially, its characters' dream of 'the Golden Country'.

12. Watch him in action shouldering his way through the crush after Michael's press conference! Typically, he can afterwards manage a grin or a joke. By contrast, note the grim fellow among the 'swells' when panic breaks out at the ballet, who looks like an unredeemed W. C. Fields.

13. 'Newsweek', August 8, 1966. The review is unsigned.

14. 'But' [writes Oliver Sacks] 'how shall we unite the "final cause" with the "efficient cause", the will with the matter, the motive with the molecule, when they seem so remote, and disparate from each other?' ('Awakenings', op. cit., pp. 219-20.) Sacks finds one answer to that question in a certain use of language, 'which we - as scientists - so often feel impelled to reject and ignore' (p.220). I've discussed this matter previously, when reviewing Lesley Brill's 'The Hitchcock Romance' in 'MacGuffin' 3.

15. 'American Cinematographer', October 1966.

16. Heckroth's most famous work, of course, was done for Michael Powell's **The Red Shoes** (1948) - a film to which Hitchcock seems to allude more than once in his own films, e.g. the ballet scene of **Torn Curtain**.

17. Where a hippie working in a bookstore removes apparently dusty Bibles to a storeroom.

18. A variant, this, on how characters in **Number 17** (1932) and **North by Northwest** (1959), for example, remove a hat or a jacket before getting down to physical action at the film's climax.

19. Walls figure prominently or intrusively at Michael's press conference, in the scene between Michael and Sarah in the East Berlin hotel, etc.

20. I discussed 'subjective' style in my article on **Number 17** in 'MacGuffin' 5.

21. A likely example of such a film is Edward Ludwig's **The Last Gangster** (1937), a clip from which turned up recently in Woody Allen's **Crimes and Misdemeanours** (1989).

22. The basis for this scene, though, may well be the clumsy, drawn-out murder of the Earl of Clarence in Shakespeare's 'Richard III' (Act One, Scene Four). Hitchcock alluded to the Shakespeare play when he addressed a class of cinema students at the University of Southern California. See my article, "Out of Hitchcock's Filing Cabinet", in 'Filmviews' 135, Melbourne, Autumn 1988.

23. The phenomenon to which I refer here is that of the fish which knows no other environment than water. Of course, Plato's 'myth of the cave' reminds us of how a more transcendent form of knowledge is available - though perhaps never (for most of us) absolute knowledge. In turn, Plato's thinking relates to Schopenhauer's concept of art, mentioned elsewhere in this article. Finally, such thinking perhaps also resembles Hitchcock's concept of cinema.

24. Not all the concentration camps, by any means, were isolated from population centres - something which Hitchcock noted at an early stage of planning the BMI film. By means of panning and tracking shots, done without cuts, he was able to affirm the reality of what was shown. (Perhaps it's time that such footage was re-screened, particularly in Germany itself.) See Elizabeth Sussex's article, "The Fate of F3080", in 'Sight & Sound', Spring 1984.

25. An aspect of this sequence may remind us of how another American couple abroad, on a bus filled with Arabs, had once been told by a beaming Frenchman, 'There are moments in life when we all need a little help'. I'm thinking, of course, of Hitchcock's 1956 **The Man Who Knew Too Much**.

26. In 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 1, I mentioned how the film's business with the ballerina and the press photographers may have been suggested to Hitchcock by an embarrassing incident which had happened to him when he was staying at Lake Como in Italy. (The incident occurred some years before 1970, so the timing seems to fit.) As the person recounting the story remembers the incident, 'I think he was actually a little offended when we told him that [the photographers] were not there for him but for the wedding.'

27. Besides the on-stage flames, there's a fiery sun painted on the stage back-cloth.

28. Hitchcock's library in his office contained an impressive collection of art books and current magazines on graphics. (The Jung book mentioned in the text is profusely illustrated with pictures of classic paintings, stills from films, etc.) See Stephen Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (1991), p. 142.

29. More recently, screenwriter Michael Eaton has said that 'the structure of the thriller narrative exactly corresponds to that of a rite of passage.' See his "Thrilling Rituals" in 'Sight & Sound', August 1991.

30. Gorham A. Kindem, "Towards a Semiotic Theory of Visual Communication in the Cinema", Ph. D. dissertation (Arno Press, 1980), p. 212. Note the citing of another Greek myth here.

31. Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient myths and modern man", in Jung, op. cit., p. 132.

32. Actually, '**Torn Curtain** attracted a surprisingly large audience, generating more domestic rental income (approximately $7 million) for its distributor (MCA/Universal) than any of Hitchcock's other films after **Psycho**'. Robert E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992), p. 264 (n. 27).

33. Hitchcock originally wanted to end the film with Armstrong, having arrived in Sweden, burning Lindt's formula in the fire. But commercial considerations intervened. See L. Furhammar & F. Isaksson, 'Politics and Film' (1971), p. 141.

34. Cf. my point about fellow-feeling in the bus sequence. For what it's worth, I'm reminded of Dickens's critique in his novel 'Hard Times' of Mr Bounderby, 'a man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and is not to be talked into allowing for anything over'.

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Ten Best Lists - of now and forever

Pulsing with significance, the 1992 'Sight & Sound' list of the ten greatest films (as voted by international critics) is as follows:

1. Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941)
2. La Règle du Jeu/The Rules of the Game (Jean Renoir, 1939)
3. Tokyo Story (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953)
4. Vertigo (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)
5. The Searchers (John Ford, 1956)
6. Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)
   Pather Panchali (Satyajit Ray, 1954)
   The Passion of Joan of Arc (Carl Dreyer, 1928)
   L'Atalante (Jean Vigo, 1934)
10. 2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

(For the 1982 list, which hardly differs from the above, see 'MacGuffin' 1.)

A contributor to the 1992 'Sight & Sound' poll was Australian film critic - and 'MacGuffin' reader - Tom Ryan. We thought we would publish not Tom's 'all-time' best (that's in 'Sight & Sound', December 1992) but his best of 1992. Next time we'll print more 1992 lists received from our readers. Note that the following list includes both features and documentaries which received their Australian first-release last year.

1. Madame Bovary (Claude Chabrol, France)
2. Night on Earth (Jim Jarmusch, USA)
3. A World Without Pity (Eric Rochant, France)
4. Paris is Burning (Jenni Livingstone, USA)
5. That Night (Craig Bolotin, USA)
6. Black Harvest (Robin Anderson and Bob Connolly, Australia)
7. The Long Day Closes (Terence Davies, Britain)
8. Bram Stoker's Dracula (Francis Ford Coppola, USA)
9. Strictly Ballroom (Baz Luhrmann, Australia)
10. Trust (Hal Hartley, USA)
    Light Sleeper (Paul Schrader, USA)

(In a letter, Tom calls **Madame Bovary** 'Chabrol's best film in years'. He especially mentions the director's comment on one of his earlier films with Isabelle Huppert, **Violette Nozierre**, to the effect that he's 'not interested in judging but in understanding'.)

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A word to writers for little magazines. 'Chips Off the Writer's Block' now offers you 3 ways to get involved, 3 ways to get published in our 3 informative, entertaining publications. 'Chips Off the Writer's Block': writing-related nonfiction to 1,200 words. $15 US - 6 issues ($20 overseas). Sample copy $3. 'Fiction Forum': short stories to 1,200 words. $16 - 4 issues ($20 overseas). Sample copy $4. 'Catharsis': poetry, all genres, to 40 lines, ongoing contests. $7 - 2 issues ($10 overseas). Sample copy $4. SASE for guidelines. Wanda Windham, Editor, P.O. Box 83371, Los Angeles, CA 90083-0371. [Adv't]

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Hitchcock films discussed in articles so far published include **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** ('MacGuffin' 1), **Stage Fright** ('MacGuffin' 2), **The Lodger** ('MacGuffin' 3), **Psycho** ('MacGuffin' 4), **No. 17** ('MacGuffin' 5), **The Wrong Man** ('MacGuffin' 6), and **Suspicion** ('MacGuffin' 7).

Charles Barr's "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British Period" appeared in 'MacGuffin' 6. A table of contents for issues 1-4 was printed in 'MacGuffin' 5.

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ODD SPOT: SHADOWS OF HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock's **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) has become the most re-made of all his films. First there was **Step Down to Terror** (1958), which had Charles Drake in the Joseph Cotten role as a psychopathic killer hiding out in a small town. Rod Taylor played a policeman and writer Czenzi Ormonde (**Strangers on a Train**) helped in adapting the script.

Then came **Strange Homecoming** (1974), a TV movie starring Robert Culp which no-one now remembers, perhaps because the plot had been altered to make its debt to the original less apparent. The sister, so well played in the original by Patricia Collinge, became a brother who is also the local sheriff (Glen Campbell in his TV-movie debut).

Now there's a third re-make, another TV movie, which keeps the original title, stars Mark Harmon, and has Tippi Hedren in a supporting role. Clearly not wanting to hide the Hitchcock connections, the filmmakers have even added a carnival sequence straight out of **Strangers on a Train**. Even so, 'Sight & Sound' (June 1992) calls this version 'unnecessary'.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 9 May, 1993 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £3

EDITORIAL

Everyone remembers the baggage-car scene with its magician's props in **The Lady Vanishes** (1938). It's where more than one of the film's numerous 'vanishing acts' take place. In a radio talk, part-transcribed in this 'MacGuffin', lecturer John McConchie refers to how an important aspect of the film is 'fantasy in full flight'. And he specifically cites the baggage-car scene.

Film critic of 'The Australian', Evan Williams, counts **The Lady Vanishes** as his favourite film. He, too, singles out the baggage-car scene for special attention in his appraisal of the film printed in this issue. He notes how the scene is highly accomplished, being both comic and dramatic at virtually the same time. The leather-jacketed magician, Signor Doppo, is likened by Williams to another of Hitchcock's villains, Herr Gromek in **Torn Curtain** (1966).

Doppo, in fact, belongs to a whole line of Hitchcock villains. If the suave Dr Hartz in **The Lady Vanishes** is the 'brains' among the villainous plotters on board the train, Doppo is the 'brawn'. These two thus correspond to the characters played respectively by James Mason and Adam Williams in **North by Northwest** (1959), which of course has its own memorable train scenes.

But I want to come back for a moment to the idea that Doppo is like Gromek in **Torn Curtain**. In the last 'MacGuffin', I suggested in an article on that film that when Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman) grapples with Gromek in a life-and-death struggle, he's effectively encountering the vital-force called Will, which he shares with Gromek and with everyone else in the film. Similarly, you could say that when Gilbert (Michael Redgrave) fights hand-to-hand with Doppo in the baggage-car in **The Lady Vanishes**, he is coming to grips with the reality of a situation which, although already highly sensuous and dynamic, hasn't yet been fully 'realised'. (For a discussion of some similar ideas, see a review of the original novel of **The Lady Vanishes** in the 'Book Reviews' section of this issue.) And you could also say with some accuracy, I suggest, that the train journey in the film is itself a metaphor for the Will that is shared by **all** the characters.

Near the end of the film, when the English party have finally eluded the foreign villains, Dr Hartz speaks a valediction in two languages: his own and English. And the magnanimous sentiment he expresses is also English, in that he wishes his adversaries 'jolly good luck'. No doubt some film critics influenced by the ideas of theorist Jacques Derrida would seize on the implied 'closure' to tell us that ultimately the film itself becomes 'an enclosed, self-reflexive system'. (Again see 'Book Reviews', where reference is made to 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films' and a critic's use of Derrida to describe the 1958 **Vertigo**.)

Still, I wonder about that. As Evan Williams reminds us, no viewer of **The Lady Vanishes**, now or earlier, could miss noticing its implicit, never-actually-stated suggestion of the political events unfolding in Europe when it was being made. To categorically refer to the film as 'self-enclosed' may be rather like burying your head in sand. Once again, the 'Book Reviews' section in this issue takes up the matter, notably when English novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch ('Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals') is shown there to contest some of Derrida's views.

There's much else in this issue. In a new column called 'Short Takes', Melbourne film lecturer Christine Davis reports that Australia was well-represented at this year's Cannes Film Festival, where Jane Campion's **The Piano** (Australia/New Zealand/France) shared the Palme d'Or award with Chen Kaige's **Farewell to My Concubine** (China).

Finally, thanks to all our readers and others who have given 'The MacGuffin' their support lately. (Particular thanks to Tina Kaufman, editor of 'Filmnews', for mentioning us in the June issue, just out.)

To everyone, good viewing.

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LETTERS

Evan Williams, Lindfield, NSW, Australia

Thank you for the loan of [Stephen Rebello's 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**']. I enjoyed it enormously, though the treatment is a little uneven. One is rarely given a mental picture or impression of the personalities involved, what sort of people they were. The emphasis is very much on direct quotation. A few photos of the leading crew members would have been interesting. Indeed the whole book is rather skimpy on pictures - no doubt a result of Hitchcock's obsessive on-set secrecy.

But there are excellent insights and revelations. I was most interested to read the quote attributed to [costume designer] Rita Riggs (p. 113) concerning Margo Epper (the Perkins stand-in): 'Margo, because of her horsemanship, is long and lean and had almost a male set of hips. Of all possible people she came closest to having Tony's square shoulders and thin hips'. This entirely bears out the view expressed in my letter to 'The MacGuffin' [issue 5] that the glimpse we have of Mother in the shower scene is indeed suggestive of Norman in drag, and that Hitchcock must have been aware of this resemblance and accepted it. If one looks at the frame stills of the shower scene it is also clear that the attacker is much taller than Marion. I am more than ever convinced that we are never in doubt - or at the deepest level, **meant** to be in doubt - that Norman is the murderer, and that 'Mother' is Norman. If so, this sheds new light on the meaning of the film and the motives and intentions of Hitchcock. He could not have been as cynical and manipulative as we thought, or as he pretended to be!

* * *

Neil Jillett, Melbourne, Australia

All power to 'The MacGuffin'! I have a great affection for A. Hitchcock, or his heirs, since I've recently had three short stories published in the 'A.H.'s Mystery Magazine', New York.

[Editor's note. Neil Jillett is film critic for the Melbourne 'Age' and author of the crime novel 'Copycat'.]

* * *

James Goldsworthy, R.R. 1, Box 152, Venango, PA 16440-9605, USA

I enjoyed issue no. 8 of 'The MacGuffin. Enclosed herewith please find payment for back issues.

P.S. I am writing several articles on the Hitchcock television series which has been popular here with a wide audience for several decades (original versions and re-runs) but, unlike his films, received hardly any serious study or precise documentation.

[Editor's note. James enclosed a list of the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and the 'Alfred Hitchcock Hour' programmes he has on video, including several directed by Hitchcock himself: 'The Case of Mr Pelham', 'One More Mile To Go', 'Revenge', 'I Saw the Whole Thing'. Many of the others feature stars or players from Hitchcock's films: e.g. Pat Hitchcock, Edmund Gwenn, Oscar Homolka, Hume Cronyn, Sir Cedric Hardwicke,

MacDonald Carey, Jessica Tandy, Joseph Cotten, Ray Milland, Michael Wilding. James adds that he has many more titles coming soon and that he would like to trade - not sell - videos with other Hitchcock scholars. Anyone seriously interested in trading should write to James for his full list of titles.]

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general-interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

On books

Slavoj Zizek has edited a book of essays called - take a breath - 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)'. Contributors include Frederic Jameson, Pascal Bonitzer and Michel Chion as well as Zizek himself and several of his colleagues at the University of Ljubljana. One of Chion's pieces will be of special interest to 'MacGuffin' readers, who may recall that Adrian Martin once recommended it in these pages. It's about the use of music in **The Lady Vanishes**, and especially about what happens during the film to the tune that contains the coded message. The piece is called "The Cipher of Destiny", and the book is published in London and New York by Verso (New Left Books).

Incidentally, Zizek must be a shrewd fellow. Simultaneously with the publication of the above book, he has brought out 'Enjoy Your Symptom' which elucidates Lacan by relating each of the French psychiatrist's fundamental notions to a Hollywood film or popular culture in general. No doubt many readers will feel compelled to refer from one book to the other.

Meanwhile, Melbourne film academic Barbara Creed has contributed a chapter to a new book exploring notions of masculinity in the Hollywood film. The book is called 'Screening the Male' and is edited by Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark. Barbara's essay is called "Dark Desires: Male Masochism in the Horror Film".

Also noteworthy is the publication of 'Daphne du Maurier' by Margaret Forster. The book, which has been highly praised, discloses that the novelist found happiness for a time in her marriage to Frederick 'Boy' Browning, a preposterously romantic figure who distinguished himself in both World Wars, but that she also had love affairs with two women: Ellen Doubleday, wife of the American publisher, and actress Gertrude Lawrence. In her later life, with both these lovers dead, du Maurier's writing tended to dry up - although it was at this time that she wrote her most macabre tales, notably 'Don't Look Now' and 'The Birds'.

On critical practices and the real world

(a) The use of 'close reading' as a strategy for analysing popular culture has itself come under intense scrutiny since, of all things, the police beatings of Rodney King in Los Angeles. It was the use of this strategy that enabled the defence lawyers to successfully 'read against the grain' of the video evidence, and which resulted in the acquittal of the four accused policemen.

The American Society for Cinema Studies actually issued an official resolution acknowledging that close readings can sometimes incur misreading.

(b) This thumbnail review of Christopher Norris's 'Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War' comes from 'Sight & Sound', April 1992: 'Norris begins with Baudrillard, whose infamous comments on the non-existence of the Gulf War seriously damaged his credibility as an "advanced" thinker. In lively and provocative style, Norris takes apart the work of intellectuals from Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard to Chomsky, Said and Jameson, arguing that postmodernism is both intellectually and politically bankrupt.'

Donald Spoto promotes his 'Marilyn Monroe: The Biography'

Of course, it isn't only intellectuals who distort the truth. A particular target of author/lecturer Donald

Spoto, when he visited Australia recently on a three-month world tour, were all the 'unscrupulous journalists and writers who have made up stories about' Marilyn Monroe.

Norman Mailer, for instance, did it; he admitted as much later on television, and said his reason had been that he needed 'quick cash'.

Some of Spoto's claims: that Marilyn Monroe 'was a good and decent woman who took her relationships and her craft seriously'; that she was killed - poisoned - by her obsessed psychiatrist and the housekeeper he had installed in her house to spy on her; that she produced and starred in 'two of the finest motion-pictures given to us during the 1950s' (**Bus Stop, The Prince and the Showgirl**).

Cut-rate Hitch a sign of the times in Japan

To the familiar signature-tune, Gounod's 'The Funeral March of a Marionette', Alfred Hitchcock is making his ghostly presence felt on Japanese TV - selling cars.

Hitch had always been a popular figure with Japanese viewers. So, in a sense, it was natural recently that recession-hit advertisers should turn to him and some other dead foreign celebrities for help in cutting costs without reducing viewer-impact. The creative-manager of an advertising agency claims his firm has thereby incurred a saving of 75% to 80% on the cost of paying a top-class living artist.

A further advantage of using dead celebrities, according to another advertising executive, 'is that you don't have to worry about being sued or about them embarrassing you with scandals which might force you to pull the commercial'. That's a particularly sore point with Japanese advertisers after they were forced to scrap expensive commercials featuring Rob Lowe, sprinter Ben Johnson and Peewee Herman.

Is Geoffrey Wright wrong?

Recently, the former programme manager at London's Scala cinema was convicted of breach of copyright after showing Stanley Kubrick's **A Clockwork Orange** (1971), banned in Britain twenty years ago by its director who believed it encouraged violence.

As recent media articles have pointed out, he had a point. In Lancashire, a young woman was raped in a ritualised replay of a scene in the film; in Oxford, a 16-year-old boy acted out another scene by kicking to death a tramp.

Not surprisingly, then, Australian director Geoffrey Wright's 1991 **Romper Stomper** - which contains scenes reminiscent of **A Clockwork Orange** - has been attracting world-wide controversy. Set in Melbourne, it follows members of a neo-Nazi skinhead gang as they wage war on local Vietnamese.

In Germany, a large cinema chain refused to show it; consequently, it has had only limited release there. The local critics were lukewarm in any case, their main objection reportedly being that Wright doesn't disclose his own opinion in the film.

Footnote. Kubrick's next project is said to be a road-movie set in Nazi-era Europe.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The sources of **Vertigo**; Adrian Martin on "'Poor Alex': A Reading of **Notorious**"; book reviews (e.g. 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan...'; 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock'). Plus 'News', 'Short Takes', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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BOOK REVIEWS

White, Ethel Lina: 'The Lady Vanishes' (1936);
Murdoch, Iris: 'Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals' (Chatto & Windus, 1992; hardcover);
Lapsley, Robert, and Westlake, Michael: 'Film Theory: An Introduction' (Manchester University Press, 1988; paperback);
Raubicheck, Walter, and Srebnick, Walter: 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films: From **Rope** to **Vertigo** (Wayne State University Press, 1991; paperback);
Kapsis, Robert E.: 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (The University of Chicago Press, 1992; paperback)

If anything, the novel called 'The Lady Vanishes' (originally 'The Wheel Spins') is even more 'English' than the Hitchcock film it gave rise to. Winifred Froy, a middle-aged spinster and governess, on her way home by train from working in a remote corner of Europe, repeatedly thinks of her elderly parents ('Pater and Mater') and her Old English sheepdog, Socrates, awaiting her at journey's end. These thoughts sustain her during her ordeal of being abducted and held prisoner on the train, which of course is the novel's central episode.

In turn, that central episode is at least as old as the famous story of an English mother and daughter on their way home from the Orient who stop off at a Paris hotel from which the mother mysteriously vanishes - whereupon everyone at the hotel denies that she was ever there. One version of the story forms the basis of Mrs Belloc Lowndes's 'The End of Her Honeymoon' (1913). Another version is told in 'The Lady Vanishes' by the English engineer called Max (in the film, Gilbert) to the English girl called Iris. For Iris had seen Miss Froy before **her** disappearance, although no-one else on the train seems to remember her. The implication is that Max thinks that Iris had once read the story and now is simply imagining Miss Froy.

But of course Miss Froy eventually reappears, thereby vindicating Iris's very British trust in what her senses had told her (cf. the British empirical philosophers!) against the duplicitous schemings of foreigners. It's a classic situation and one echoed, in a way, in Iris Murdoch's new book on morals - of which, more in a moment. As for Ethel Lina White's novel, by all means read it and enjoy it. It contains things that the novel omits, including the bleakly autumnal early chapters establishing both Iris's mainly likable character and her vulnerability (wandering in the mountains by herself, she gets lost and tumbles down a valley). On the other hand, it anticipates the film in a couple of ways. Not only are some of the familiar incidents there for the reading (e.g. the business with Miss Froy's name on the train window - tangible proof of her existence until the condensation evaporates and the name disappears), but there's even reference to how Iris on the train 'had the impression that the whole scene was flickering like an early motion-picture'. (This also anticipates another film adapted from an Ethel Lina White story about a vulnerable heroine, Robert Siodmak's 1946 **The Spiral Staircase**, with its famous opening scene showing an audience watching an old-time picture-show) ...

* * *

You can read 'The Lady Vanishes' in a sitting or two. To properly read 'Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals' might take you months. But it would be worth it. English novelist and moral philosopher Iris Murdoch spent about a decade writing the book, which includes chapters on Schopenhauer, Derrida & Structuralism, and Wittgenstein & the Inner Life. My reasons for reviewing it here are several, and will become clear. Here's one. In the last 'MacGuffin' I reported how the 'transcendental pretence' had ended, leaving the individual (the former transcendental subject) anywhere but in full control and understanding of his/her existence. One reason I value Murdoch's book is that it points out how such a situation is nothing new: for instance, we've long known that 'often we cannot say quite what we mean and do not know quite what we mean' (p. 188). At the same time, the book takes Derrida's ideas about these matters seriously, explains the ideas cogently, and offers comments like how it is now, as always, largely up to the artist to assert 'the presence of the **transcendental object**' (p. 5), i.e. to thereby help give us back our sense of purpose.

But that's only the beginning. Like her namesake in 'the Lady Vanishes', Iris Murdoch stoutly resists the foreign 'plot'. She has her incidental reasons, such as the damage done to students by university

literature departments which have put excessive emphasis on Theory ('students spend their time studying the very obscure books which propound it, rather than reading the great works of literature' - pp. 194-5). Moreover, she defends many of the traditional ways of seeing:

> The 'old', and in my view good, proper, literary critic, approaches a literary work in an open-minded manner and is interested in it in **all sorts of ways**: which certainly does not exclude treating a tale as a 'window into another world', reacting to characters as if they were real people, making value judgments about them, about how their creator treats them, and so on. (p. 189)

Also, she confronts specific theories about how we are all invariably 'spoken' by language and shaped by its 'architecture'. Here's a typical passage, not irrelevant to film-viewing:

> We can also be said to think and use concepts in all sorts of perceptual and 'feeling' states where no systematic language is present; indeed (probably) most conscious states are of this kind. (p. 196)

But, above all, Murdoch stands up to Derrida on moral grounds, on how some of his theories in effect deny our necessary dealings with the real, everyday world. (I'm not sure that she reports Derrida altogether correctly in the following passage, but if we think of 'The Lady Vanishes' and the attempt made there to deny its heroine's very consciousness, we shan't go far wrong.) Here's the sort of thing I mean:

> What makes metaphysical ('totalising') coherence theories unacceptable is the way in which they in effect 'disappear' what is individual and contingent by equating reality with integration in system, and degrees of reality with degrees of integration, and by implying that 'ultimately' or 'really' there is only one system. (p. 196)

So where does all this leave us? I obviously can't begin to give a true sense of the thrust of Murdoch's more than 500 pages, but I'll answer my question anyway by reporting that the author tells us that 'meaning and truth are what they have always seemed. (A study of philosophy may be likened to a catharsis, like that of the Zen Buddhist who begins with rivers and mountains, doubts rivers and mountains, then returns to rivers and mountains.)' - p. 189. I was greatly stimulated and encouraged by this noble book, a more-than-worthy successor to the author's 1970 'The Sovereignty of Good' (whose title hinted at both her Englishness and her interest in truly universal matters).

* * *

What is refreshing about another English book, 'Film Theory: An Introduction', is that by and large it, too, keeps its head when all about are losing theirs - for theory (or Theory) is a risky business at the best of times. (For my part, I'm someone who uses theory but who doesn't believe it's indispensable. Method yes, theory no.)[1] Like Murdoch, the authors of this book are capable of seeing that 'No one theory can hope to encompass the irreducible particularity of the real' (p. 207). Their project is to trace what happened when in 1969 'Cahiers du Cinéma' announced to the world its change in direction: henceforth its writers would adopt a new 'scientific criticism' in place of 'the tradition of frivolous and evanescent writing in the cinema' (p. 214). Showing a thorough acquaintance with their subject-matter, the authors concentrate largely on the theoretical and critical outpourings, post-1969, from 'Cahiers' itself and from 'Screen' in England. (But unlike Murdoch, they don't end up taking sides. Instead, they adopt a line which is usually sympathetic to the overlapping projects of both camps.)

As a representative example of the authors' objectivity, I'll mention their reporting of the memorable 'debate' (invective?) between Stephen Heath of 'Screen' and the American Nöel Carroll which took place across several issues of 'October' magazine. (Regular readers of 'The MacGuffin' will know where my own sympathies principally lay at the time, and still lie.) Carroll 'attempted to bring down the whole enterprise of film theory operating under the sign of Althusser and Lacan' (p. 143):

> In the first place, Carroll charged that in so far as Heath was working within an Althusserian perspective his position was untenable. The line imputed to Heath on such grounds was that the spectator was reduced to an effect of the text and that any given text would interpellate ['speak'] all spectators in exactly the same way - typically, [if paradoxically,] in a way that would cause

> spectators to misrecognise themselves as transcendental egos. According to Carroll, such 'discourse determinism' was inadequate in its failure to account in any way for the undeniable fact of spectator resistance, for example, that of a spectator of **Birth of a Nation** refusing to accept the Ku Klux Klan as Aryan heroes. (p. 143)

The authors say that David Bordwell would probably have supported Carroll in this matter, as he had recently noted the latest findings of perceptual psychology showing that in watching a film spectators actively exercise a number of discriminatory skills. And the authors admit that 'there was, undeniably, a tendency in much 1970s film theory to impute a solely determining force to the text itself' (p. 144). However, they stop short of raising the sorts of moral objections to Althusser, et al. that Iris Murdoch would use - no doubt because to do so would be 'unscientific'.

On the other hand, we're told that far more important to Heath than Althusser was Lacan: 'Heath's appropriation of Lacan makes him not so much opposed to the conception of the [active] subject demanded by Carroll as determined to go beyond it' (p. 145). Once again, though, the authors play fair, for they suggest that for Heath (as for Foucault and Barthes and for 'Screen' - to all of whom, remember, the authors are sympathetic) the point now becomes 'not to interpret the world but to change oneself and, by implication, others' (p. 147):

> And for Barthes and Heath the vehicle for change was Lacanian psychoanalysis, and its justification was political: you change the world by altering the modes of being within it. All of which ... undoubtedly shifts the domain of the debate away from the purely academic. This said, however, the thorny problem of specifying the effectivity of a particular text in a particular historical moment remained unresolved. (pop. 147-8)

Only at the end of the book does its scrupulous - if dogged - tone fade a little. The following point seems exact enough:

> The search for a satisfactory theory of meaning has been at the forefront of analytic philosophy for over a century, to the extent that all other philosophical questions can be seen as waiting for its formulation or for agreement that there can be no such thing. (p. 217)

So that when the authors proceed to claim 'that the terrain of film studies, more so than any other area of cultural studies, has been won, and held, by the Left' (p. 219), you wonder if this isn't a non-sequitur or, at any rate, premature. Personally, I prefer to recall again Iris Murdoch's defence of open-mindedness in criticism, and of the critic's right to operate 'in **all sorts of ways**'. To employ another of Murdoch's felicitous terms, I believe in 'attending' to (and taking your cue from) the text itself - if possible, without the mediation of (general) theory.

* * *

Schopenhauer once wrote as follows: 'To have original, extraordinary, and perhaps even immortal ideas, one has but to isolate oneself from the world for a few moments so completely that the most commonplace happenings appear to be new and unfamiliar, and in this way reveal their true essence.' As I come now to 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films', I have a particular reason for quoting Schopenhauer - as will be seen. The book boasts a Foreword by Andrew Sarris which, frankly, is as level-headed and as specific about what constitutes Hitchcock's genius - as well as his occasional lapses - as anything that follows it. This, despite Sarris's admission that he doesn't know how to pronounce 'diegesis' or 'why one must approach Freud only through Lacan' (p. 12). (I've wondered about that too. In the light of the previous book, the answer can only be political. But you never see it admitted. Here once again, academia hardly does itself credit by its lack of openness and by its seemingly cowered obedience to what the invisible hand of, in this case, the Left directs it to say and do.)

Sarris says of Hitchcock's films that 'They can withstand any snobbish assault, and nourish any theoretical system.' (p.12) That's true, and it nicely anticipates one of the findings in Robert Kapsis's book on Hitchcock's reputation (which, again, I'm coming to). My only quibble with any of Sarris's points might concern his suggestion that 'the blandness of MacDonald Carey as the "straight" suitor in **Shadow of a Doubt**

(1943)' marks an occasion when Hitchcock 'nodded' (p. 12). I've always thought, rather, that Carey, with his flappy ears, suitably represents part of Hitchcock's joke at the expense of policemen in the film (and at the expense of small-town life generally). He is, after all, the film's equivalent of the plodding detective called Joe in **The Lodger** (1926), of which the American film is the virtual remake. To employ Lacanian terminology, both policemen come from the dull world of the Symbolic, whereas Hitchcock's real 'heroes' are the Oedipally under-developed - but insightful - guilty parties (the Lodger, Uncle Charlie) who represent the Imaginary. You might even say that the policemen are the critics, whereas the more alert and, in a sense, more open-minded 'villains' are the artists.[2] It invariably requires both luck and time for Hitchcock's police to catch up with his criminals - if they ever do.

And there you have the keynote for my attitude to this book, which I approached with high expectations. A book of essays about five of Hitchcock's best films (**Rope**, **Rear Window**, **The Trouble With Harry**, **The Man Who Knew too Much**, **Vertigo**)? How could it miss? But, very largely, that's what it does. Mind you, its editors do all the proper things, such as providing introductions which locate and summarise the essays in terms of current Theory. For instance, they make several references to Derrida. Here's a typical passage:

> Derrida insists that truth and reason, the highest values of traditional humanism, are infected by relativity to the utmost degree; that in fact all hierarchical distinctions or logical sets of opposition within human discourse are untenable. (p. 26)

Nothing exceptional there, in any sense of that expression. And two of the essays are immediately identified for us as conforming to Derrida's position (which of course is a good thing). 'Thomas Hemmeter's discussion of **Rope** in this volume deconstructs the film's ostensible moral basis.' 'Katie Trumpener's analysis here of **Vertigo** demonstrates how all facets of the film replicate each other to create an enclosed self-reflexive system.' All well and good - if with a touch of blandness about the writing which threatens to evoke MacDonald Carey's playing in **Shadow of a Doubt**. But let's look at some of the essays.

First, Hemmeter's piece on **Rope** ('Twisted Writing; **Rope** as an Experimental Film'). Some of it is good, especially when it notes the James Stewart character's rationalisation of why he couldn't have committed murder. 'Something deep inside me would have stopped me', he claims, thereby echoing his own earlier mocking of people who use vague language. He had been chatting with Mrs Atwater (Constance Collier). Taking his cue from her remarks, he had told her that he'd once seen a film whose title was 'the something something. Or was it just plain something?' Thus Hitchcock makes a serious point: there's a sense in which we are all capable of murder even if we deny the fact (here, it prompts Stewart's vagueness); for to employ Lacanian terms again, the Imaginary (where anything is conceivable) is residual in all of us. But Hemmeter's attempt to relate the Stewart character's self-deception to some theories of the fashionable Derrida is clumsy, and ends up producing silliness like his final paragraph:

> The audience is a necessary part of the staged events. The neon sign blinking a repeated S outside Brandon's windows speaks the language of the roped-in audience, a theatrical hiss at Brandon and Rupert which itself is duplicated visually by the camera's slithering glide through the film ... (p. 264)

Moreover, the author had earlier been guilty of conveniently distorting the truth when he'd claimed that critics hitherto had seen **Rope** in either one of two ways: as strictly an experimental film (employing ten-minute takes, elaborate camera movements, etc.) or as strictly a film of serious moral purpose 'despite its technical experiments' (p. 254). The truth of course is that some latter-day critics before Hemmeter had been capable of seeing and respecting how Hitchcock's fondness of technical experiment had actually facilitated his finding deeper meanings.

John Belton has written intelligently on Hitchcock before now. Sadly, his piece in this book ('The Space of **Rear Window**') is just a formal exercise. It's got plenty of footnotes and lots of qualifying phrases and clauses, but very little insight or new information. Even more sadly, the book's other essay devoted just to **Rear Window**, Anthony J. Mazzela's 'Author, Auteur: Reading **Rear Window** from Woolrich to Hitchcock', is jejeune and, yes, silly. I can't resist giving an example. The name of the James Stewart character in this film is of course L.B. Jefferies. I'm surprised that no-one has yet speculated in print about what those initials might stand for or suggest (a future President perhaps?), but anyway Mazzela does better. He tells us that the second syllable of 'Jefferies' is 'pronounced like "frees" as in "the act of freeing," or (if

film is paramount) "freeze," as in a "freeze frame."' Then he explains: 'The James Stewart character in the film is frozen in a sterile life from which he is freed by the murder of Anne Thorwald and the love of Lisa Fremont.' (p. 66) Mazzela sees further significance in the first syllable of **Lisa**'s surname: her love frees Jefferies 'from his sexual fears and anxieties' (p. 66). But the first syllable of Mrs Thorwald's (or Mr Thorwald's) surname goes unremarked. I guess that by this time Mazzela considered the matter too obvious to need pointing out.

Doug Tomlinson's article on Hitchcock's performers ('"They Should Be Treated Like Cattle"') is, frankly, woeful. Still, to liven us up, it does contain the classic howler, 'extenuated montage' (p. 98), which Tomlinson uses to describe the drawn-out moment when a terrified Scottie (James Stewart) in **Vertigo** clings to a roof. (A later article, at page 124, employs the word 'discrete' when it's clear that 'discreet' is meant. I mention this, and the use of 'extenuated' instead of 'attenuated', only because both of the book's editors are professors of English, after all. The reader expects better.)

Next comes William G. Simon's 'Hitchcock: The Language of Madness'. This is at least mildly interesting, and I was pleased to see Simon noting how Scottie in **Vertigo** is a victim of repetition-compulsion among other ailments. (Regular 'MacGuffin' readers will recall that in the last issue I noted that Lina in **Suspicion** and Marnie in **Marnie** suffer from a similar complaint - which, incidentally, happens to be very cinematic.) However, Simon is another critic who sometimes stretches truth. In **Vertigo**, the coroner (Henry Jones) at the inquest into Madeleine's death gives a succinct if caustic summing-up which criticises Scottie. At one moment, in order to reprimand Scottie's superior-officer for negligently employing him in the first place, the coroner speaks sarcastically of 'the great city to the north' (where, presumably, everyone is supposed to be infallible). Here's my point. For reasons of his own, Simon considers the coroner 'excessively verbose' and misquotes him to that effect (substituting 'metropolis' for 'city' - p. 112). Not only is the accusation unfair, but the coroner's sarcasm (and, for the viewer, the humour involved) seems to have gone over Simon's head.

In truth, until the reader of the book is nearly halfway through it, there has been only one reasonably satisfying piece, that by Thomas M. Leitch on the films scripted by John Michael Hayes ('Self and World at Paramount'). Leitch's main point is that all these films end up stressing a hitherto alienated protagonist's re-integration into society. This chimes with what Hayes told me when I met him in Hollywood in 1975. He also told me that from the start he had regarded Hitchcock as a 'cool' director (Leitch refers to 'Hitchcock's customary pessimism' - p. 37), and that he saw his main task as being to inject 'warmth' into each script. He gave the instance of the gag near the start of **Rear Window** where Stella (Thelma Ritter) claims to have predicted the stock market crash in 1929 because she had noticed the head of General Motors going 'to the bathroom ten times a day'. At this point in the film, Hayes said, the audience is won over. The ice has been broken.

Speaking of screenplay writers, a highlight of the book is the transcript of a talk given by Samuel Taylor, who wrote **Vertigo**. He tells a similar anecdote to Hayes', about how when he read someone else's earlier draft of the script, he knew what the problem was. He reported to Hitchcock: 'It's a matter of finding reality and humanity for these people. You haven't got anybody in this story who is a human being; nobody at all. They're all cut-out cardboard figures.' (p. 288) The result was that Midge was invented, in effect to humanise Scottie for the audience by showing that he was an ordinary man.

Incidentally, Taylor didn't write the scene with the coroner. That was already in the script when Taylor received it, and he feels that Hitchcock probably wrote it himself (p. 290). All Taylor did was to change a couple of things and give the scene some rhythms.

Now I come to what is probably the best thing in the book, Robert Stam's 'Hitchcock and Bunuel'. After all the dry application of theory, re-hashing of old information, and generally poor writing that has preceded it, Stam's piece is one of the book's few oases. (Another is Ina Rae Hark's comparison of the two versions of **The Man Who Knew Too Much**: I would like to think that film academics won't fail to notice that both of these articles are **comparisons**, i.e. they're relatively concrete and are concerned with realities, not just notions. Still, I won't bet on it.) The article runs for thirty pages, but here's perhaps its central point about the two Catholic directors:

> The real relation between Hitchcock and Bunuel is not one of either simple identity or contrast, but rather of complementarity. To the gothic underside of Bunuel - witness the horrific ambulatory hand of **The Exterminating Angel** - corresponds the quiet surrealism and sense of the 'marvellous' of much of Hitchcock. (p. 119)

Stam here gives examples. 'The extroverted Spanish surreality of **L'Age d'Or** is echoed by the understated 'English' absurdism of **The Trouble With Harry**. The dystopian banquet and spatial confinement of **Rope** are recapitulated in **The Exterminating Angel**.' And he decides that 'Hitchcock's obsession with dream, his Bretonian **humor noir** and his love for narrative implausibilities qualify him as at least a crypto-surrealist.' (p. 119)

On this matter of surrealism, I do have a criticism of Stam. It's largely that he seems unaware of previous work comparing the two directors, notably as published in the book 'Surrealism and the Cinema' (1976) by Michael Gould - who was just 26 at the time and a recent graduate of the film department at York University in Toronto. It's a stimulating work which has chapters on The Surrealist Sensibility, Bunuel, Sternberg, Hitchcock, Fuller, Animated Film, and The Artist-Inventor (on Edison, Warhol, Snow). Several of its points anticipate Stam's, and it makes many others. For instance, it quotes the passage from Schopenhauer I gave above and reveals that this was the inspiration for the ideas of the Italian surrealist painter Giorgio de Chirico. In turn, Gould notes parallels between Chirico's art and Hitchcock's:

> Hitchcock's clarity of vision finds an ideal representation in **Vertigo**. If he tried for the Chirico quality in **Spellbound**, he truly reaches and surpasses it here ... All these exteriors are shot late in the day, when a low sunlight casts long shadows and a golden glow, giving the scenes their feeling of deep perspective.

Here I suspect that Gould was quoting Hitchcock himself who had once described to Peter Bogdanovich the Chirico quality: 'the long shadows, the infinity of distance, and the converging lines of perspective'. And I wouldn't be the first person to be reminded by this of the cornfield scene in **North by Northwest** (1959).

I think that Gould actually makes the surrealist point better than Stam. But the latter has much more to write about. For instance, he says of the two directors that 'the repressed anticleric in Hitchcock corresponds to the closet believer in Bunuel' (p. 125). And he adds:

> Religion, pervasive in Bunuel, also subliminally informs much of Hitchcock. His 'wrong men' recapitulate - at times comically (Roger Thornhill), at times tragically (Father Logan) - the Golgotha of their exemplary prototype: Jesus Christ. (p. 129)

Yes, and you think also of Mary Rose, in Hitchcock's cherished project to film J.M. Barrie's mystical play, coming back to haunt the living - with additional connotations of the Mary Immaculate.

Which brings me to a final point about Stam's generally excellent article. On page 126 he claims that the ideal of celibacy, 'critised in **Nazarin** and hysterically lampooned in **Simon of the Desert**, is subtly undermined in **I Confess**'. He points out that the audience of Hitchcock's film is frustrated by the non-consummation of the romance, shown in flashback, between Logan (Montgomery Clift) and Ruth (Anne Baxter). But as Logan becomes a priest in the film, and is then prepared to die for his faith, I can only say that on this occasion Stam is being insensitive to the beauty of Hitchcock's concept. The audience may indeed be made to suffer, but it is (or should be) suffering **with** the Clift character for his sacrifice, and not suffering turned **against** the Church, as Stam believes. As Schopenhauer and others long ago realised, the world itself - its Will - is ultimately responsible for our suffering. So let's not blame the Church, or Norman Bates's mother, or the bird realm. Not if we want to be realists, that is.

There are other articles in the book, including an interesting piece on Brian De Palma. But that's my cue to turn, finally, to Professor Kapsis's book.

* * *

The first half of 'Hitchcock; the Making of a Reputation' traces the shifts in Hitchcock's fame during his

fifty-year career in film and television, and considers his posthumous reputation. A later chapter examines the career to date of frequent 'Hitchcock-imitator', Brian De Palma. At issue is 'whether an artist's fame is earned or unearned' (p. 242). Kapsis says that the factors affecting artistic reputation are twofold, being either intrinsic (the films or texts themselves) or extrinsic. But in Hitchcock's case, at least, his continuing high status seems deserved, not just 'because of the great range of his work but also because many of his films have been able to sustain a diversity of interpretations' (p. 243).

It's equally clear, though, that non-textual factors contributed to Hitchcock's prestige. Kapsis treats several of these - the director's self-promotion, sponsorship by others, changing aesthetic codes - before he finally nominates changing aesthetic codes as having been crucial. The rise of auteur criticism in the late 1960s helped Hitchcock's self-promotional efforts 'in ways inconceivable in the pre-auteur era' (p. 243).

Brian De Palma's case necessarily involves a different emphasis. Kapsis uses it to illustrate a 'time-of-entry' hypothesis whereby a promising artist (e.g. De Palma) may find himself being penalised for following too closely - in a double sense - the work of a towering predecessor (e.g. Hitchcock). No matter how gifted the later-comer, 'critics will tend to view [his] work as imitative and unoriginal' (p. 189).

Now, I would have to say that there are few great surprises in the book. Nor is Kapsis, to judge from the rare occasions when he ventures his hand, himself a major critic. In fact, at times he appears positively philistine. Nowhere is this more marked than at the point where, having rebuked Robin Wood for his allegedly over-zealous defence of **Marnie** (1964), he immediately offers his own trite interpretation of a scene from the same film (pp. 130-1).

Still, he has compiled his masses of material with vigour and clarity. And there are many incidental pleasures for the reader who may be sceptical about the 'scientificity' of the overall project. (How do you **prove** a time-of-entry effect?)

What Kapsis has to say in a section (pp. 64-8) about **The Birds** (1963) may stand as representative of the mixed feelings the book is likely to arouse in the reader. After the first American TV network screenings of the film (in January 1968 and February 1969), Hitchcock received hefty deliveries of 'fan' mail complaining about the open ending and the lack of explanation for the bird attacks. (Similar complaints had arrived at the time of the cinema release.) Instead of tending to reply, as he had previously, that (1) there were real-life precedents for birds invading homes, or that (2) the bird attacks represented 'any catastrophe', he now usually commented that (3) the ending leaves open to the audience's imagination what will happen next, or that (4) if he could say why the birds were attacking humans, he 'could also tell you why **people** are trying to kill people'.

This is surely fair comment. As I see it, all four of Hitchcock's 'explanations' - of the inexplicable - are apposite. I particularly appreciate the 'Schopenhaurian' perspicacity and forthrightness of the last (as I think Iris Murdoch would too). So I'm baffled when Kapsis seems to 'freak' and says that (3) is 'cantankerous' and that (4) 'makes clear that Hitchcock's honeymoon with his fans was indeed over' (p. 68). Is this perhaps another sign of Kapsis's philistinism, of his not seeing that art may - at times - be multivalent or ambiguous? Surely not, for later in the book he praises a certain (feminist) reading of **Marnie** for showing how that film is a 'multivocal' text (p. 139); and later again he cites the same film as one which gives 'compelling support' to Richard Posner's argument that an artist's posthumous reputation 'is facilitated by the generality, variety and ambiguity of the reputee's work' (pp. 243-4).

So although, as I say, I'm baffled and annoyed by moments in the book, I'm not denying its general air of readability - like an airport novel's. Kapsis has other interesting findings to offer about **The Birds**. For example, he deals with Hitchcock's concern over a lack of characterisation in the script. (You find yourself thinking that what was needed was a fixer like John Michael Hayes or Samuel Taylor.) And despite Kapsis's lower than top-grade performance as a critic, I did appreciate at least one of his 'textual analyses'. He neatly describes the characteristic titles-sequence of the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' programmes, including the use of a barely perceptible cut. 'The impression given by this sequence', he concludes, 'is of Hitchcock the creator, Hitchcock the dominant force behind the show, Hitchcock the magician and master of illusion' (pp. 31-2). This is precisely how I view the opening of **The Wrong Man** (1957), as readers of 'MacGuffin' 6 may recall.

There's an adage which says that failed artists become critics. Now we may add another such adage: failed (or would-be) critics become writers of reputation histories. Nevertheless, in his field Kapsis has set a generally high standard.

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Notes

1. The most salutary illustration I can give of the pernicious effect of adherence to mere theory - where trust in the evidence of one's senses was called for - concerns the 'father of modern philosophy', René Descartes (1596-1650), and a group of his seventeenth century followers. Descartes, not wishing to be heretical, i.e. for reasons of expediency, taught that humans aren't mechanistic beings but are unique in having immortal souls - which he identified with consciousness. The perfectly logical outcome of this doctrine for the Catholic philosopher and his adherents was that animals could not have consciousness. They were mere machines, automata. So Descartes himself proceeded to dissect living animals in order to advance his knowledge of anatomy; and at the Jansenist seminary at Port-Royal the work of experimenters was noted by an eye-witness:

> They administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference, and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of a little spring that had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them and see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of conversation.

Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) would have understood - and been suitably appalled. The essayist and moralist wrote:

> Presumption is our natural and original disease ... 'Tis by the same vanity of imagination that [man] equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, and withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures.

Concerning theory's potential for untruth and arrogance, then, I rest my case. (I've drawn most of the above information from the highly-respected work of Peter Singer, a professor of Philosophy at Monash University, Australia. See especially his book, 'Animal Liberation', second edition 1990, pp. 198-202.)

2. I'm reminded of something said by Somerset Maugham: 'Only the artist, and maybe the criminal, can make his own life.'

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BLOOPERS

We got the details wrong last issue of where Hitchcock obtained the footage of the flame seen in the titles-sequence of **Torn Curtain**. It was, in fact, the 'Rocketdyne' works where engines to be used in the Apollo moon flight were being tested. Hitchcock: 'We were able to go out and photograph just the core of the flame and steam from half-a-mile away with a long-focus lens. On the morning [we] shot, $34,000 worth of fuel was used just for three takes! We didn't pay, they were testing.' ('Film', Summer 1966)

It seems that there may be some contention about which film the narrator of Chris Marker's **Sans Soleil/ Sunless** (1983) means when, referring to the felled sequoia scene in **Vertigo**, he says he remembers 'another film in which this passage was quoted'. Last issue, Adrian Martin ('Letters') suggested Alain Robbe-Grillet's **L'Immortelle** (1962) is the film meant. However, Michael Gould's 'Surrealism and the Cinema' (1976) says that the **Vertigo** moment is 'similar to a moment in Chris Marker's [own] **La jetée**' (1963) ...

We're all fallible. Back in 'MacGuffin' 5 I wrote that author Charles Dickens (1812-70) was, like

Hitchcock, a Cockney. Wrong! Dickens was of course born in Portsmouth, Hampshire. So although his typically London-centric novels are full of 'Hitchcockian' humour and suspense, and include vivid Cockney characters (e.g. the Wellers), apologies to our readers are called for - and hereby given.

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CANNES, 1993

As this 'MacGuffin' goes to press, the Cannes Film Festival has just concluded and the word 'triumph' is being heard loud in the land following the awarding of the Palme d'Or to the Australian entry **The Piano**, directed by Jane Campion. **The Piano** shared the prize with the Chinese film **Farewell to My Concubine**, directed by Chen Kaige. To quote from the Prime Minister's telegram to Campion: '... Another triumph for the Australian film industry, an Australasian triumph ...'[1]

Cannes has lately become the most important international showcase and launching pad for new Australian films, a development spurred on by the success of Jocelyn Moorhouse's **Proof** (special mention from the Camera d'Or jury in 1991) and Baz Luhrmann's **Strictly Ballroom** (close runner-up for the Golden Camera Award for best first film in 1992). Both these films went on to win a clutch of Australian Film Institute awards, including Best Film.

Each year one Australian movie seems to become required viewing for virtually everyone in the country. **Strictly Ballroom** was last year's designated 'biggie'. It's a lighthearted dance-comedy in which, **Dirty Dancing**-style, ugly duckling girl blossoms into swan when hurled by Fate into the dominant arms of handsome leading man (Paul Mercurio). The pair take on bitchy opponents and corrupt officialdom to win the National Ballroom Dancing Championships, and simultaneously find true love. I'm told that teenage girls, under Mercurio's spell, were treating the ticket office as a revolving door, some clocking on for seven straight viewings on the same day!

I should mention director Luhrmann's recent contribution to Australian political culture. Volunteering to design the nationally televised campaign launch for Prime Minister Paul Keating's ruling Labour Party, which seemed poised for electoral defeat after four terms in government, Luhrmann and the **Strictly Ballroom** production team transformed the less-than-glamorous interior of the Bankstown Sports Club in Keating's working-class electorate into a starkly elegant television environment - dubbed for the night the 'Strictly Paul Room'. When, two weeks later, Labour grabbed victory against the predictions of pollsters and pundits alike, Luhrmann's launch was generally agreed to have been the turning point. Moral: 'When you're hot ...'

This year's 'biggie' may be Yahoo Serious's new comedy **Reckless Kelly**, directed by and starring Serious as a modern-day descendant of famed Australian outlaw-hero Ned Kelly. Serious will be hoping for big business in the US and Europe to repeat the success of his first feature **Young Einstein** (1989). Australian critics have not been so generous this time around, however, taking issue with the film's strained, highly artificial plot and lack of funny lines and memorable moments (with most of the latter said to feature in the film's trailer). Under these constraints, it seems that Serious's studiedly naive screen persona may be wearing a little thin.

To return to Cannes: of the twenty or so films selected for Official Competition, three were Australian: Campion's **The Piano**, Stephen Elliott's **Frauds**, and Laurie MacInnes's **Broken Highway**. Tracey Moffat's **Bedevil** screened in the 'Un Certain Regard' programme.

Campion has made the trip to Cannes several times. **Peel**, her powerful, minimalist study of family members under stress, won the Best Short Film award in 1986.

Her first feature, **Sweetie** (1988), a stylised comedy of Australian family life, played deadpan against claustrophobic, highly coloured settings, did not fare so well with its Cannes audience but went on to successful art-house release in Australia.

An Angel at My Table (1990), Campion's account of the early life of New Zealand novelist Janet Frame, offered a complete change of style and theme. Softly coloured and painstakingly naturalistic, **Angel** was based on the idea that the least event in the life of an artist ought to be celebrated as being of value and significance - arguably a very romantic notion.

The Piano, set in New Zealand in the 1850s, and starring Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel and Sam Neill, tells the story of a woman who journeys to New Zealand to marry a man she has never met. Campion has spoken recently of her love for nineteenth century literature, especially Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights' and the poetry of Emily Dickenson.[2] With its starry cast, starkly beautiful settings and music by Michael Nyman, **The Piano** (as yet unseen in Australia) would seem to offer wide scope for the expression of Campion's romantic impulse.

A record number of Australian films screened in the Market at Cannes this year. Among them was **Redheads**, a thriller directed by Danny Vendramini, which came fresh from the International Action Film Festival in Valenciennes where it was named Best Film. Its co-star Claudia Karvan picked up that festival's Best Actress award. (Cannes' Best Actress award went to Holly Hunter for her role in **The Piano**.)

Of course, by the time the next 'MacGuffin' rolls around, the state of play of all these films - critical responses, further festival successes (or otherwise), distribution deals, public excitement/controversy/outrage - will be clearer. I'll pick out a few to discuss in more detail then.

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Notes

1. Campion is a New Zealander who has lived in Australia for fourteen years. **The Piano** was conceived, developed and written in Australia, the production company is Australian, but much of the film's funding is French. **The Piano** is set in New Zealand and features two well-known American actors in leading roles. Hence the P.M.'s reluctance to claim an undiluted Australian triumph. 'Australasian', a word seldom used here in the last twenty years, could be due for a revival, courtesy of **The Piano**.

2. Interview in 'Cinema Papers', May 1993.

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Another 'best of 1992' list

Last issue we printed academic and critic Tom Ryan's 11-best films of 1992. Tom's list was drawn mainly from feature-films that had received a commercial first-release in Melbourne during the year. (His top film was Chabrol's **Madame Bovary**.) But Adrian Martin, film writer and critic, ventures a little further afield in his 14-best list printed below, and includes both short and feature films seen on TV, on video and at festivals, as well as at regular commercial screenings. Fascinatingly, if not altogether surprisingly, the two lists are totally different, with no overlap.

1. La Belle Noiseuse (Jacques Rivette, 1991)
2. A Man Escaped (Robert Bresson, 1956)
3. Barton Fink (Joel and Ethan Coen)
4. Raise the Red Lantern (Zhang Yimou)
5. The Match that Started My Fire (Cathy Cook)/ The Illustrated Auschwitz (Jackie Farkas)
6. My Own Private Idaho (Gus Van Sant)
7. The Hairdresser's Husband (Patrice Leconte)
8. Husbands and Wives (Woody Allen)
9. Antoine and Antoinette (Jacques Becker, 1947)
10. Slightly Scarlet (Allan Dwan, 1956)
11. Poison Ivy (Katt Shea Ruben)
12. The Disenchanted (Benoit Jacquot, 1990)
13. Bright Angel (Michael Fields, 1990) - video-only release, scripted by novelist Richard Ford
14. The Last Days of Chez Nous (Gillian Armstrong)

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TRAINS AND THE CRIME NOVEL

[In the 1930s a flurry of crime novels with trains as their principal setting was published in England. Authors who immediately come to mind include Agatha Christie, Graham Greene, and Ethel Lina White. Few articles have done fuller justice to the reader's enjoyment of the train-crime novel than this fondly-remembered piece by Hugh Douglas, an employee of British Rail. The article was originally called 'Commuting'.]

Ships and planes have been used successfully by crime writers, but as a location they suffer from the disadvantage that they're not really in our world as they travel: their routes don't relate to real life or

death, so they are soulless phantoms orbiting beyond man's environment until the moment they touch land. And then, seaports or airports are not at the heart of cities - where people live, love and commit violence against their fellow man. Even the motor car is a capsule sealed off from humanity.

The train is different. It has all the good qualities that other modes of travel offer to the crime novelist, but it has more. Although quite isolated from its environment, the train never ceases to be a part of it. A real world of houses, villages, cities, fields, cows and even people pass by the window. Yet this world is quite out of reach, unable to affect the traveller for good or ill. Reality is just beyond his fantasy world, but quite unattainable. The wheeled thing rolls on, out of the reader's control. There is no escape. In this enclosed space the tension heightens all the way to journey's end.

The train is a universe of its own. It is confined, remote and comfortable. Whodunit victims always travel first class so their blood soaks into the thick plush cushions, leaving no vulgar mess. Indeed, the whodunit train resembles that other favourite venue of the thriller, the secluded country house, with the compartment as closely confined as a smoking-room. Here must be no vulgarity, no undue ostentation, no overindulgence - just solid comfort.

But unlike the country house the reader's companions on the train are strangers - or so he thinks. Who are they? Who is victim and who villain? Half a dozen people eye one another, reading (or is it lurking?) behind a newspaper, dozing fitfully, or glancing apprehensively from window to fellow passengers and then to the door. The train rushes into a tunnel, and the overhead reading lamp clamps a mask over the face of the man opposite, turning him from a benign Dr Jekyll to a savage Mr Hyde. Can he really be as sinister as he looks, or is he one of the red herrings with which the whodunit's track is strewn? And who is that old lady knitting in the other corner? Her eyes are everywhere. Is she waiting for the chance to thrust a No.10 needle six inches into someone's heart, or is she dear Miss Marple biding her time to unravel the problem?

Truly, travellers are strange bedfellows. Bedfellows? My God, the sleeping car is lethal. Here is the most isolated place in the whole world, a tiny square of space, lonelier than the summit of Everest. And what are all these switches, buttons and bolts for? Does the door lock securely? It is impossible to try it without opening it again. And will the distant clanging of the bell be answered by the steward, or will it bring some sinister caller?

Day restores the scene to that comforting , comfortable country house, filled with elegance and peopled with feudal staff. In the dining car the stewards show all the attentiveness of old family retainers, and breakfast is as generous as it would be for a house party in Devon, with only the food-loaded sideboard missing. But in the train there can be no relaxed feeling for long, because murder has been committed and work is in hand to solve the crime. While the innocent hover in fear, the murderer's confidence crumbles. He is as much the victim of the confined space as of the detective's skill.

The train journey has shape, and shape is what the writer is seeking when he plans his novel: within a time-scale the crime will be perpetrated, discovered and solved. Journey's end will reveal all, convict the guilty and release the innocent. It is very tidy.

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HITCHCOCK AND TRAINS

[Recently, as part of a radio talk on 'Films and Trains', lecturers Noel Purdon and John McConchie of Flinders University, South Australia, referred to the connection in British society between trains and 'class'. In Hitchcock's **Suspicion** (1941), for example, when Cary Grant invades the first-class compartment of Joan Fontaine, he effectively transgresses both her space **and** her social class.

John McConchie develops his ideas about Hitchcock in the following excerpt from the programme.]

Right from the outset of his career, Hitchcock connected trains with a sense of disaster. This is clearly something he was quite in love with: bringing down aeroplanes in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940) and that sort of thing.

By the time you get to **The Lady Vanishes** (1938), (1) you've got a very tense European situation which is immediately picked up in the film; (2) you've got the kinds of divisions of not so much classes this time but of nationalities across the train; (3) you've got the idea of fantasy in full flight.

Everyone who knows **The Lady Vanishes** can remember discovering the box of magician's tricks in the baggage-van. Or the way, for example, that when the rear of the train is uncoupled only the English are left aboard because they were all having tea up the front of the train - whereas all the other European nationalities don't indulge taking tea and are therefore left behind.

All these are discrete elements that Hitchcock, particularly as a formalist, took great delight in being able to stitch together into clearly what is one of his most fascinating and enjoyable films.

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'The Lady Vanishes' (1938): an appraisal

In a recent poll of international critics[1] I was asked to name my ten favourite films, and without much hesitation I put **The Lady Vanishes** at the top of my list. But like many of those who responded to the survey I qualified my judgment. A list of one's favourite films, I pointed out, a little pompously, was not necessarily a list of the greatest or the most important. But wasn't this qualification - it later occurred to me - a mark of critical snobbery? Was I not saying that while I loved this film most of all, having seen it so often that I knew it by heart, I still felt a need to pretend that other films were in some way superior? Hitchcock, who had no illusions about the artistic significance of his films, and who would have disapproved of critical insincerity far more than critical misjudgment, would no doubt have said that one's favourite films and one's opinion of the best films are logically one and the same, and that if a film pleases an audience, that is all that matters.

The Lady Vanishes, as we know, was far from being Hitchcock's own favourite. Of the films of his British period he preferred **The 39 Steps** (1935). But he was not, as we also know, necessarily the best judge of his work. (His special fondness for **The Trouble With Harry** [1956], for example, has always puzzled me.) So whenever I am asked, as I was by the editor of 'The MacGuffin', to account for my opinion I usually fall back on the comment that **The Lady Vanishes** is the film that best combines the three great elements in Hitchcock's work - comedy, romance and suspense - and maintains them in the most delicate equilibrium. The screenplay by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat is, I think, the wittiest and most ingenious of all Hitchcock's scripts, the most appealing in its development of character, and the most slyly satirical in its depiction of national stereotypes and human foibles.

In their adaptation of Ethel Lina White's novel, Launder and Gilliat added the two silly-ass Englishmen played by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne, and with Hitchcock's approval devised a new ending. The result, simple and effortless as it seems on the screen, is among Hitchcock's most intricately plotted concoctions, yet one of his most seamlessly constructed and coherent. And few films have done more for their makers' careers. When premiered at London's Cambridge Theatre in August 1938, it was the first film to be billed with the director's name above the title (though on the film itself Hitchcock's name still appears in the usual way). It marked the beginning of Michael Redgrave's film career as well as that of Radford and Wayne, who went on to play Charters and Caldicott in subsequent films. Buoyed by the success of **The Lady Vanishes**, Launder and Gilliat set up their own production company; Paul Lukas went on to bigger things, winning an Academy Award two years later for **Watch on the Rhine**; and the obscure Gainsborough trademark got a boost as well. The oval portrait of the Restoration lady (in all prints I have seen of **The Lady Vanishes** it appears only as a miniature at the end), was later promoted to up-front status, rivalling the Rank gong or the shot of Big Ben used for Alexander Korda's London Films, the other prestige trademark of the time.[2]

Of course it's not a perfect film. For all its charm and ingenuity, I am often struck by its insolent carelessness, its inattention to finer detail. Even by the relaxed standards of its time, the opening table-top set, with its lifeless models and seemingly driverless car, is extraordinarily crude. The follow-through movement into the chalet is accomplished with a quick dissolve, suggesting that the continuous tracking shot for which Hitchcock was probably hoping was abandoned as too difficult. (A similar

movement was attempted 22 years later for the opening of **Psycho**, and likewise failed to come off.) Odd lapses of continuity persist. Margaret Lockwood's outfit changes at least twice during her train journey, once on her return to her compartment from the dining car (the monogrammed scarf is soon discarded) and once during the taxi ride to the Foreign Office. Even lines of dialogue are recycled: 'If this is some sort of joke I'm afraid I don't see the point,' says Iris after Miss Froy's disappearance; and 'If this is a practical joke I warn you I shan't think it very funny' (Caldicott before the gun battle). We are given no information about the only actual murder in the film, the strangling of the 'folk-singer' under Miss Froy's window. I always look among the train passengers for a man with a ring on the fourth finger of his right hand - the one visible clue to the killer. So far I haven't spotted him.

Hitchcock and his screenwriters were just as careless about details of climate and season. Our first thought is that the story takes place in winter: the chalet is snowbound, and when Miss Froy leaves the building through the front door she walks into a blizzard outside. Next day the sky is clear, and talk of the test match ('hope the weather's like this in Manchester') suggests that it is summer. The flower-pot dropped on Iris's head (has there ever been a sillier and less convincing murder attempt in a film?) is full of blooms, though the men are still wearing heavy coats. Of course the weather could be just as fickle in central Europe as it is in England, but a winter setting seems consistent with the idea of frost on the train windows. When I first saw the film I took it that Miss Froy was writing her name in condensation on the glass, but later viewings suggest that she is writing in a film of dust. If she had written in condensation I suppose the letters would have run by the time Iris sees them again. I think we must assume that this is just another dirty European train from which buckets of scraps are routinely thrown by careless foreign railway staff. (Incidentally, although Miss Froy tells us that the words 'A million Mexicans drink it' appear on the label of Harriman's Herbal Tea, they are not visible on the packet that clings to the train window.)

The jokes and send-ups are among Hitchcock's best, sharp but never malicious. The recurring cricket joke, for example, though somewhat laboured, is still quaintly appealing. Like the other main subplot involving the philandering barrister and his mistress, it makes possible those sudden and plausible changes of testimony from Iris's fellow passengers which leave her increasingly baffled without confusing the audience. The logistics of these scenes are as beautifully and unobtrusively orchestrated as any in Hitchcock. I have only one difficulty with the cricket joke. It is hard to believe that the chalet can be totally isolated from news of the outside world when Charters and Caldicott are able to read the New York Herald-Tribune in bed together. (Perhaps it is an old copy.) The newspaper is, of course, used to screen their view of the maid undressing in the room. The idea of excessive prudery is familiar in Hitchcock (Bernice Edgar, Norman Bates), but it is the least satisfying aspect of the Charters and Caldicott performance. Of rather more interest is the spectacle of the two of them in bed. Male bedmates were acceptable in comedies until well into the 1940s (see Laurel and Hardy), though it is surprising to find Caldicott naked to the waist and Charters without his pyjama pants. Perhaps it was summer after all!

Although the scenes at the chalet are usually regarded as no more than a prologue to the main action (and an overlong one at that), they contain some of the film's funniest moments. Charters and Caldicott are given half a dozen lines that would have had them up before an anti-discrimination tribunal in today's more sensitive climate. The joke lies in the fact that every put-down of the central European or 'Balkan' type ('third-rate country', 'all grown-up children, y'know') is delivered by an Englishman whose own behaviour is no less risible or offensive. It is, after all, the English who are shown to be uncultured (mistaking the 'Hungarian Rhapsody' for a national anthem), boorish (cutting off strangers' phone calls) and indifferent to the comfort of their fellow guests. The exception is Redgrave, never more likeable than here. After a certain reediness, a namby-pamby querulousness in his first encounter with Iris, his character grows steadily more debonair, intrepid and robust. The parody of ethnic folk-dancing rituals over which he presides is shrewdly timed and wickedly accurate. I used to wonder why one of the ethnic dancers was dressed in a dinner suit until a fellow Hitchcockian pointed out that he was the waiter from the dining room downstairs.

Redgrave is such a perfect foil for Lockwood's spoilt and world-weary Iris that it's surprising they weren't paired more often in subsequent films. They appeared a year later in **The Stars Look Down**, but never again thereafter. Yet in **The Lady Vanishes** they generate the sort of chemistry that Hollywood discovered all too rarely: Gable and Colbert in **It Happened One Night** (1934), Russell and Grant in **His Girl Friday** (1940). The

names and the voices were British, but the mood was pure Hollywood. No English film so clearly anticipated the Hollywood of the Forties. Iris's line - 'I've been everywhere and done everything, what is there left for me but marriage?' - exactly foreshadows the throw-away pop-cult cynicism of a later generation: 'Been there, done that'. The difference is that Iris is rewarded for her coquettish bitchery and self-pity (she ditches her unfortunate fiancé Charles at Victoria Station without so much as a pretty speech) by finding happiness with the man she loves. And as usual in Hitchcock, we are on the side of the heroine, however flawed and undeserving she may be. Linden Travers, as the genuinely deserving 'Mrs Todhunter', the one woman in the film who is truly wronged, enjoys no compensating good fortune - though the death of her caddish lover, Eric Todhunter, played by Cecil Parker, is probably a blessing in disguise.

It was **The Lady Vanishes** that first signalled Hitchcock's obsession with psychoanalysis and psychiatrists. They kept bobbing up in his films for years afterwards, offering their pat explanations, spouting whatever Freudian or neo-Freudian mumbo-jumbo was fashionable in their day: 'I've known cases where a sudden shock or blow can induce the most vivid impressions'. Hitch never tired of this sort of thing. Paul Lukas, as the brain surgeon Dr Hartz, is the consummate Hitchcock villain - urbane, handsome, humorous (even gallant enough in the final moments to wish the fugitives good luck). We like him far more than we like Eric Todhunter, the film's one genuinely contemptible figure. It is through Eric that Hitchcock and the writers articulate their political stance, which is powerfully anti-pacifist and anti-appeasement. **The Lady Vanishes** would have angered Chamberlain as much as the 'pro-German' sentiment of **The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp** (1943) is known to have angered Churchill. In 1938 appeasement was still a perfectly respectable attitude in Britain's ruling circles. In questioning appeasement Hitchcock was taking a commercial risk. And he got away with it. I think it quite likely that **The Lady Vanishes** did more than any other film to sway British opinion in favour of war with Germany. Two years later, in **Foreign Correspondent**, he tried to do the same with public opinion in America, and may well have succeeded.

But Hitchcock was far too shrewd an artist to let political attitudes distort or dominate his work. The overtly patriotic **Saboteur** (1942), which is underrated in my view, and the strongly 'anti-German' **Lifeboat** (1943) were both films of high artistic integrity. What comes through most strongly in **The Lady Vanishes** is not the director's political stance but the central philosophical notion that was to shape most of his work: the idea of an ordered world threatened by chaos, the deceptiveness of external reality. These ideas are treated with an engaging and mystifying levity that masks Hitchcock's inner seriousness.

Miss Froy's disappearance is of course the central mystery, but the sequence in the luggage van, when Iris and Gilbert search for her among the props of Signor Doppo, the Italian magician, is for me the supreme comic summation of all Hitchcock's attitudes and skills. There is no more richly inventive and effortlessly accomplished passage in all his work: it is to be compared, in my view, with the entire Grand Hotel sequence in **Young and Innocent** (1937) and the famous set-pieces in **North by Northwest** (1959). Within a few minutes we have several major plot twists, Iris's own disappearance (and reappearance), a couple of engaging impersonations by Redgrave (Sherlock Holmes, Mr Chips), the discovery of a vital clue (Miss Froy's glasses), one or two frivolous closeups of watching animals from the magician's act, Signor Doppo's capture (and disappearance), and a final dénouement, all logically linked and integrated, and executed in a lovely mood of romantic teasing and playfulness. Reality has never looked so precarious. And for good measure there are eerie premonitions of later films: the fluttering of doves and pigeons when Iris falls amid a clutter of boxes is like a foretaste of **The Birds** (1963), and the overpowering of the leather-jacketed Doppo has always reminded me of the laborious killing of Gromek in **Torn Curtain** (1966).

While writing this piece I asked another trusted Hitchcock admirer if she had any fresh thoughts about **The Lady Vanishes**. 'WHy should there be a grand piano in the Foreign Office?' she replied. It's another improbability, of course. (Why, come to think of it, would Iris's dearest friends not return with her to England for the wedding?) But the piano gives a charming flourish to the ending. This is one of several Hitchcock films in which music is vital to the plot; indeed the whole subject of music in Hitchcock is a study in itself. Hitchcock rarely used music as a mere overlay for the visuals: he used it to advance his stories, to illuminate both mood and character. And the characters in **The Lady Vanishes** are all memorably defined. Admittedly some are stereotypes; but stereotypes rely on an underlying truth, and someone, after all, must first define that truth. Miss Froy may be a stereotype of the lovable but deceptively sharp-witted old lady, a Miss Marple, but she is nonetheless believable. The baroness ('wife of the propaganda minister') is a stereotype as well, but has any woman in Hitchcock - Mrs Danvers excepted -

looked more sinister, and done so with fewer words? With characters like these there are no lapses of interest. Without a director of Hitchcock's genius **The Lady Vanishes** might have fallen flat whenever Miss Froy was absent. She is a figure of such charm that audiences would have missed her. It takes a special ingenuity to compensate for her absence in the middle of the film, and Redgrave and Lockwood are of course the key. The reunion at the end is genuinely exhilarating.

No Hitchcock film is so quintessentially the work of its director yet so obviously the product of inspired collaboration. Acting, script, casting, settings, music, timing and thematic construction - every element comes close to perfection. **The Lady Vanishes** is the most accomplished light entertainment I have seen in the cinema. Perhaps it **is** a great film, not just one of my sentimental favourites.

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Notes

1. [Editor's note. See 'John Kobal Presents the Top 100 Movies' (London: Pavilion Books, 1988).]

2. [Editor's note. The Gainsborough lady in the oval portrait - or a version of her - appears at the start of some Gainsborough films made before **The Lady Vanishes**, e.g. the 1935 **The Clairvoyant**. It's possible, though, that the lady in question was soon afterwards 'retired'. I'm fairly certain that 1940s Gainsborough films feature a different up-front lady.]

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ODD SPOT: CONFUSING THE ISSUE

James Monaco has recently edited an 'International Encyclopedia of Film'. No doubt it's excellent, and lacks blemishes like this one from his earlier 'The Connoisseur's Guide to the Movies'. Praising Billy Wilder's **Irma la Douce** (1963), he notes that it's based on a French musical. Then he adds: 'Putting such thoroughly American stars [as Shirley MacLaine and Jack Lemmon] in French roles ... confuses the tone, but the songs are good. In fact, the film turns out to be very much an American parody of French musical culture.' Interesting. For the film version, Wilder deleted all the songs.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 10 August 1993 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £3

EDITORIAL

John Buchan (1875-1940) wrote stirring travel books and wonderfully 'picaresque' adventure tales, i.e. about a hero on an exciting journey, and he simultaneously pursued a career in public life. He became governor-general of Canada in the same year, 1935, that Alfred Hitchcock made a memorable film version of his most famous story, 'The Thirty-nine Steps'. In view of his eminence, perhaps it's surprising that some of the attitudes he expressed - including towards Jews and homosexuals - were no more enlightened than those held in the general community of his day. Then again, perhaps it isn't so surprising. The 'uncomplicated' nature of Buchan's melodramatic tales is one of the things that makes them compelling reading (much of the time), even today. There's a vigour in their telling which indicates a 'sublimation' of the self's darker side - a darker side which can only be permitted to show itself in the stories' villains. Perhaps, too, Buchan's attested popularity and success in his public career were due, in some degree, to the lack of 'complication' he also needed to display there.

When Hitchcock moved to America in 1939, he left behind his purely 'Buchanesque' self (if it could ever be said to have existed): 'adventure' films like **Foreign Correspondent** (1940), **Saboteur** (1942) and **North by Northwest** (1959) notwithstanding. The 'new' and deeper-running Hitchcock of the 1940s can be felt by a viewer of **Notorious** (1946), and I think it's not the least of the virtues of critic Adrian Martin's article on the film in this 'MacGuffin' that he most deftly indicates the dark currents and the shifting aspects located there. Not for nothing does Adrian call his article 'Around **Notorious**', for as he explains: 'I have not wanted to work towards a systematic textual analysis ... [but] have endeavoured to "circle" the film as I believe the film itself circles its characters, situations, themes.'

I'm not saying that Hitchcock in America 'forgot' John Buchan, exactly. A key ingredient in **Notorious** is the relationship of Alex (Claude Rains) to his mother, the immensely intimidating Mrs Sebastian (Leopoldine Konstantin) - a relationship which Hitchcock seems to have taken holus-bolus from Buchan's 'The Three Hostages' (Chapter VIII, 'The Blind Spinner'). And the climax of the same novel - a confrontation of hero Richard Hannay and the villain called Medina high up in some Scottish crags - conforms to a 'picaresque' tradition which is discussed elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin' in relation to **North by Northwest**.

What I am saying is that Hitchcock in America became a truer artist than John Buchan could ever have been. Some of the tension between Hitchcock the public entertainer and Hitchcock the 'serious' artist is conveyed in a recent book edited by Slavoj Zizek, an authority on the work of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (d. 1981) and on the relevance of Lacan's work to an understanding of popular culture. Zizek's book is reviewed in this issue.

Overall, I guess that this 'MacGuffin' is primarily one for the Hitchcock scholars. Next time, we may have a more varied bill of fare. Thanks to the many people who have helped bring this issue about, not least our letter-writers and contributors. And a warm welcome to the many new readers in Australia who heard about us from watching Bill Collins on TV host a wonderful Hitchcock 'retrospective'.

To everyone, good viewing.

LETTERS

Jeff Cross, Wheelers Hill, Victoria, Australia

As an aspiring film buff I am gratified to have acquired access to such an informative publication on Alfred Hitchcock. Because I'm only 17 I have not yet seen half of Hitchcock's films, namely his earlier ones like **The Lodger** and the 1934 version of **The Man Who Knew Too Much**. Some months ago I wrote a critique on **Psycho** for a media studies CAT [Common Assessment Task], therefore I hope you don't publish too much on that film, because after having studied every possible source on **Psycho** in the entire universe I've become sort of sick of it.

Did you hear an American cable TV network are making **The Birds II**, starring a wrinkled Tippie Hedren? Don't be surprised to see the robot penguins from **Batman Returns** pop up as stunt players. On a more mature note, I look forward to reading 'The MacGuffin'. Hitchcock has certainly become one of my five favourite directors, along with Scorsese, Spielberg, Coppola and Truffaut.

* * *

Professor James Naremore, Department of English, Indiana University, USA

Thanks for the two issues of 'The MacGuffin', which I enjoyed a great deal. You can be sure I'll remain a faithful subscriber. Incidentally, your review of my book on acting [in 'MacGuffin' 4] is quite accurate and fair. I wish I had realized that the washroom scene in **North by Northwest** derives from 'The Confidential Agent' - a book I read many years ago. As you'll see, the introduction to my [forthcoming] Rutgers Press edition makes a good deal of the affinities among Hitchcock, Greene, and Ambler. I would have used that reference to Greene had I been aware of it.

[Editor's note. For the record, the incident in Greene's book involving a woman's razor comes at the end of Part One ('The Hunted').]

* * *

John Reid, 16 Carob Place, Cherrybrook, NSW 2126, Australia

I enjoyed 'MacGuffin' 9. Enclosed is cheque for issues 1-8.

I have a number of original posters of Hitchcock's films. Do you know if there are many collectors in Australia?

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general-interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

More light on 'Shadow'

Playwright Thornton Wilder's script for Hitchcock's **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) was completed on board a train from California to Washington, D.C., where Wilder was due to start work with the Army's Psychological Warfare Department. Director Hitchcock and the film's genial producer, Jack Skirball, a former rabbi, went along too, and the three men held story conferences all over the train. By journey's end the script was finished, although Hitchcock and the others all felt that additional details of small-town family life were needed. Later, Hitchcock asked comedy playwright Sally Benson to contribute what he delightedly called 'dangling dialogue' - dialogue spoken at cross-purposes where nobody is really listening to what anybody else is saying. And Hitchcock's wife, Alma Reville, then polished the script, knowingly making provision for her husband's famous 'touches'.

pull out the Zizek bits for a stand-alone piece on how he/Lacan are no more (perhaps less) perceptive than S

These insights into the making of **Shadow** are contained in a detailed article by George Turner in the May issue of 'American Cinematographer'. Turner notes that 'Broadway star Patricia Collinge, winningly vulnerable as the mother, also wrote the romantic dialogue between [Teresa] Wright and MacDonald Carey'. So the film was definitely something of an ensemble effort, a circumstance which fits well with the story's emphasis on a family and its surrounding community.

Interiors

Maverick director Paul Cox (**Man of Flowers, Vincent**) has finished shooting **Exile** in outback Tasmania, and will leave Australia for his next three films. The first is a film set in Israel, to be followed by a film on Nijinsky in Russia and the third, a film with the Greek actress Irene Pappas, to be made in India.

Dutch-born Cox, 53, who looks more like Rembrandt or Van Gogh every time he's interviewed for 'The Movie Show' (SBS-TV), told viewers recently: 'I'm very interested in making films about the interior, about what people think and feel. Our silences are far more important than the words we speak.'

Ozu and O. Henry

Recently discovered in a private collection in Japan was Yasujiro Ozu's 1929 comedy **A Straightforward Boy/ Tokkan-kozo**, which had long been considered lost. It turns out to be an example of the director (**Tokyo Story, I Was Born, But ...**) at his most Hollywood. In fact, the story is O. Henry's admirable 'The Ransom of Red Chief', about a kidnapped boy so exasperating his captors that they release him, later filmed by Howard Hawks as his contribution to the portmanteau film **O. Henry's Full House** (1952). Ozu is said to have shot his version in just four days.

Kissing makes it better

Hitchcock's **Notorious** (1946), set in Brazil, probably holds the record for the longest screen-kiss, that between Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant in a hotel room. Obviously impressed, Brazilian promoters recently organised a 'Kissathon' with cars as prizes. After 62 days, two couples were both announced winners.

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BOOK REVIEW

Zizek, Slavoj (ed.): 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)' (Verso, London & New York, 1992; paperback)

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
- T.S. Eliot, 'The Hollow Men'

This, then, is the last misapprehension to be clarified: the ultimate 'secret' of **Psycho**, the secret epitomized by Norman's gaze into the camera ... is that this Beyond is in itself hollow, devoid of any positive content: there is no depth of 'soul' in it (Norman's gaze is ultimately 'soulless', like the gaze of monsters and the living dead) - as such, this Beyond **coincides with gaze itself**: 'beyond appearance there is not the Thing-in-itself, there is the gaze' - it is as if Lacan's proposition bears directly on Norman's final gaze into the camera; it is as if it were made to summarize the ultimate lesson of **Psycho**.
- Slavoj Zizek, 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan', p. 257

That we abhor nothingness so much is simply another way of saying that we will life so much, and that we are nothing but this will and know nothing but it alone. But we now turn ... to those [saintly beings] who have

overcome the world, ... and who then merely wait to see the last trace of the will vanish with the body that is animated by that trace. Then, instead of the ... never-satisfied and never-dying hope that constitutes the life-dream of the man who wills, we see that peace that is higher than all reason ... whose mere reflection in the countenance, as depicted by Raphael and Correggio, is a complete and certain gospel.
- Arthur Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. I

In 'MacGuffin' 4 I wrote an article on **Psycho** (1960) which suggested that the story of Norman Bates parodies both saintliness and creative imagination. The article proposed that everyone in the film is driven by blind Will, but that Marion Crane's unwitting allusion in the opening scene to Milton's famous sonnet, 'On His Blindness', may indicate the possibility of a different order of seeing, located 'offscreen'. Such seeing may have been granted Milton when, instead of despairing at his literal blindness and the waste of his 'one talent which is death to hide', he found serenity in writing his sonnet and then patiently 'waiting' before later composing 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained'.

My article quoted another 'religious' poet, T.S. Eliot, in order to characterise the condition of both Milton and, in a sense, Norman Bates the last time we see him: 'complete simplicity/ (Costing not less than everything)'. Now, clearly that condition is very like the one evoked by Schopenhauer in the passage given above. Notice, especially, Schopenhauer's description of how the saintly person patiently **waits** 'to see the last trace of the will vanish with the body', thereby attaining 'that peace that is higher than all reason'. (Schopenhauer's abhorrence of suicide is related to his thinking here, something I'll take up shortly.)

However, Slavoj Zizek would reverse most of this. He's effectively saying that the saintly countenances depicted by a Raphael or a Correggio are themselves a parody of the truth - which is that there is **only** 'the gaze'. He's saying that Norman Bates is us, the viewers of Hitchcock's film, inasmuch that everything that happens in the film is animated by our gaze. Accordingly, the film ends when Norman gazes back at us, and we leave the cinema neither more nor less edified, in a sense, than if we had collectively looked in a mirror - and seen ourselves looking.

Hitchcock scholars will recognise that idea as coming from William Rothman's 'Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze' (1982). Rothman's book is a major and painstaking work, if an overweening one. Its author would have us believe that there's just one essential Hitchcockian 'mystery' and that now he's solved it for us. Perhaps inevitably, the general approach taken in Zizek's book proves to be only slightly more open. Its various 'Marxist' contributors - several of whom teach with Zizek at the University of Ljubljana - too often (I suggest) interpret the films in ways that are ingenious but finally seem pat. Here's an instance. At least three contributors refer to how Hitchcock's films imply the existence of a place beyond the visible. Frederic Jameson's 'Spatial Systems in **North by Northwest**' does so by tracing the narrative to its double climax atop Mount Rushmore and in the train immediately afterwards, where at the literal edge of the film's world an 'ideal marriage' is transacted, implying 'a concept of the private' that's 'beyond representation' (p. 52). Alenka Zupancic follows up with a piece on the 1930 **Murder!** ('A Perfect Place to Die: Theatre in Hitchcock's Films') reminding us that the acrobat-murderer Handell Fane commits suicide by leaping from a trapeze - yet by **not looking at the audience** below him may be said to have escaped into a non-public space or 'dimension' (pp. 102-3). (Perhaps you'll hear yourself quoting Andrew Marvell: 'The Grave's a fine and private place'.) And Zizek's summary-essay ('"In His Bold Gaze My Ruin Is Writ Large"') makes **several** similar points concerning **Psycho**, among them a reference to Lacan's notion of a hypothetical subject dwelling '"beyond the wall of language"' (p. 245) and a description of the film as one which forces the viewer 'to **identify with the abyss beyond identification**' (p. 226).

Here's my point. Having conceptualised, with Hitchcock's help, an offscreen place or 'abyss' that can hardly be represented - surely not altogether unlike the Jesuit poet G.M. Hopkins's 'no-man-fathomed' cliffs of the mind - Zizek and his contributors interpret the concept only in the dreariest Lacanian terms. The imagination and the spirit seem to have **no** place with them. It's as if such things had been **foreclosed** from their consideration. In the light of the book's essay, discussed below, on **The Wrong Man**, which makes considerable play with the idea of foreclosure, this omission seems ironic.

I'll try and explain further. Zizek discusses notions of the Lacanian 'stain' and of the **unheimlich**, the uncanny: both of them, 'intrusions' in the film which you might think invite the viewer to profoundly

question what is shown. Yet Zizek sees both things only as perversities which, respectively, **induce** the gaze and **remind** us of the 'threatening overproximity' (p. 244) of what we see. (His logic here is that the **unheimlich** signals 'absolute Strangeness' and thereby 'indexes its opposite'.) Now, I think Zizek tends to see 'stains' wherever it suits him (see below). Equally, he tends to overlook such things if they're inconvenient. For instance, in discussing **Psycho**, he makes no reference to the moment when Marion half-quotes a line from Milton. As to what the filmmakers intended by that allusion, it may help if I cite two parallel cases (which I also referred to in 'MacGuffin' 4). In **The Trouble With Harry** (1956), the eccentric Doctor Greenbow stumbles about quoting, barely audibly, Shakespeare's Sonnet 116 to the effect that 'Love alters not with [Time's] brief hours and weeks,/ But bears it out even to the edge of doom.' And in **Marnie** (1964), Mark Rutland misquotes some lines from one of Emerson's 'Voluntaries' - a misquotation gleefully pointed out by Lil, Mark's sister-in-law. Here the (ideal?) viewer-listener recalls the passage correctly, together with the equally well-known lines that immediately precede it in the poem: 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man'. Thus in each case - a half-quoted line, a mumbled recitation, a misquotation - it's fair to say that Hitchcock is being both facetious and deadly earnest. In hinting to the audience at a broader perspective than meets the eye (a God's-eye view, even), he allows himself a certain play of wit; but most of all, he elevates 'the commonplace in life to a higher level'. At least, that's what he told Truffaut he intended in **The Trouble With Harry**. To illustrate the general idea, Hitchcock cited the image of blood suddenly spilt in a rustling brook. He called it a case of dramatic 'counterpoint'. But for our purpose, what matters is how such literal 'staining' may suggest something 'higher' ...

In sum, I would have to charge Zizek and several of his contributors with lacking imagination. Several of them, but not all. I'll largely exempt from my charge the two contributors who hail from 'Cahiers du Cinéma': Pascal Bonitzer and Michel Chion. Both of them write elegantly and without dogma. Chion especially. As for Bonitzer,[1] his best piece is the one on suspense, which I discuss later. Another of his essays, called 'The Skin and the Straw', isn't quite as satisfying. For instance, when it cites the passage from 'The Hollow Men' which heads this review, you can't help noticing how facilely Bonitzer uses Eliot's verse in order to leap from the taxidermist's-workshop scene in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956) to a discussion of Norman Bates's favourite hobby in **Psycho**, and then to this conclusion:

> Such is Hitchcock's vision of [the hollow] man. ... This sombre image is our own. It is as if we were led by a kind of go-between, a double who, on the screen-mirror, moves at random ..., and as if we thought of ourselves as traversing with that double a domain of appearances, only to fall vertiginously into the void which constitutes us. (p. 184)

You may almost want to breathe a 'Quod erat demonstrandum' to yourself after that! (Bonitzer's essay was written in 1984, i.e. soon after the publication of Rothman's Hitchcock book.)

Moreover, the meaning of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** perhaps isn't as clear-cut as Bonitzer implies. To some degree, Hitchcock and his scriptwriter John Michael Hayes seem to have conceived their film as a commentary on the notion of 'kismet' (fate, destiny) following the widespread popularity of the stage musical of that name - and, to a rather lesser extent, of Vincente Minnelli's 1955 film version. Beginning with North African scenes which refer to the Islamic religion and incorporate, at one point, the Doris Day character's complacent singing of 'Que sera, sera' ('What will be, will be'), the story soon moves to London and successive climaxes emphasising different aspects of individual action and mutual help: first, James Stewart's ignominious escape from a locked nonconformist chapel by climbing its bell-rope; second, Day's deflection of a would-be assassin's aim by her scream during a performance of 'The Storm Cloud Cantata' at a packed Royal Albert Hall; and third, husband and wife (Stewart and Day) working concertedly at last to rescue their kidnapped son who is being held prisoner in a foreign embassy. Here, Day again sings 'Que sera, sera' but no longer complacently or blindly, and Stewart **again** ascends - a flight of stairs this time - but now specifically in order to locate the boy, who has heard his mother's singing and has cried out in answer.

Whether all these events amount to the working of kismet is something the film studiously avoids telling us. What it does seem to insist on is that, put crudely, two heads are better than one. Three may be even better. Now, given such human interaction, we may infer that the individual **is** more than a cipher, at least potentially. So here's a related point. Bonitzer's quoting of 'The Hollow Men' is legitimate to the extent

that it respects both Eliot's and Hitchcock's meanings. As noted above, Eliot is a 'religious' poet. Bonitzer, though, rather neglects how the poem as a whole, although it may seem at times to be mocking Christian liturgy, doesn't rule out the **possibility** that the poet will eventually find a 'higher' peace. Which is to say, Eliot's isn't exactly a nihilist vision. Similarly, the inclusion in Hitchcock's film of various religions (Islam, nonconformism, an implied Anglicanism, and likewise a hint of pantheism) alongside several other forms of authority (the police, the state, royalty, art itself) may in the first instance do no more than remind us of the sheer multiplicity and diversity of **all** life's forms. But then, we may come to infer what Schopenhauer called that 'never-satisfied ... hope that constitutes the life-dream of the man who wills' - a hope which, in some sense, has 'religious' implication. As we'll see, it's also inextricably part of Hitchcockian suspense.

* * *

I've begun with this rather inconclusive foray outside Zizek's book in order to nevertheless give what I think is a reasonable picture of the films' intent: which is to be, up to a point, all things to all people, or 'what you will'. In my view, that intent isn't the same as 'Lacanianism', although the two may overlap at times. Actually, I think Hitchcock's purpose resembles Shakespeare's, in the sense implied by Kierkegaard (1813-55) when he praised the dramatist for his 'objectivity'. Significantly, the 1956 version of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** was going to be called **Into Thin Air**, thus evoking the famous passage from 'The Tempest' beginning

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air.

But perhaps because Hitchcock had already found the title of one of his films (the 1932 **Rich and Strange**) in the same play, he chose not to repeat the procedure. Nevertheless, and without contradicting what I've said above, the theme of life's insubstantiality always informs his work, often in quirky and unexpected ways. Michel Chion's delightful essay on the 1938 **The Lady Vanishes** ('The Cipher of Destiny') sees that film as 'a veritable narrative of initiation' (p. 138), a succession of literal and/or metaphoric vanishings or 'tunnels' leading to an appropriately musical ending - for, as Chion shows, the whole film has involved tunes carried inside people's heads. In the final scene, the tune of Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March' almost 'blacks out' the vital coded message, i.e. another tune. But now two heads again prove better than one (or three heads better than two), and all ends happily. Something **has** come of nothing - almost like one of the film's conjuring tricks. And this time, at least, there's no nullifying gaze in sight.

* * *

Alenka Zupancic's essay on **Murder!**, which I've already briefly mentioned, draws on the philosophy of Kant (a seminal influence on both Schopenhauer and Lacan) in order to suggest that the effeminate Handell Fane's suicide represents a triumph over his patrician opponent, Sir John:

> If, throughout the entire film, Fane is a mere shadow of Sir John, at the end he will radically subvert this situation by his act of 'pure autonomy': now Sir John emerges as nothing but Fane's pale shadow. (p. 98)

Unfortunately, Zupancic here not only jettisons common sense - which Hitchcock, at some level, always respected - but she misses how Fane's final gesture at best only **parodies** true spiritual attainment (thereby anticipating the end of **Psycho**). Schopenhauer saw that Kant was wrong in thinking suicide a pure moral act, what Zupancic would call an accession to Lacan's 'the Real' (cf. pp. 94-5). Crucially, Fane's suicide is a deliberate act, and the note he leaves Sir John shows well enough that his mind hasn't been unhinged. So Bryan Magee's 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' might almost have been referring to **Murder!**:

> the man who commits suicide does so (unless the balance of his mind is disturbed) because he sees it as the lesser of two evils - for instance as the only escape from an intolerable state of consciousness, or ... from some ignominious public disgrace - and therefore as his self-interested preference in the circumstances.[2]

Magee notes how Schopenhauer anticipates Freud (as so often) in considering suicide 'a form of aggression and quite specifically an assertion of self-will. "Just because the suicide cannot cease willing, he ceases to live."'[3]

Exactly. And when Fane, murderer and female impersonator, is **aggressively** hunted down by Sir John, we see him finally (or penultimately) enter, like Norman Bates, a state which is scarcely other than pure willing, before leaping to his death from the trapeze. If this does in fact represen a triumph, it's a hollow - and a fleeting - one indeed.[4] By the same token, we obviously can't say that **Sir John**'s victory is unequivocal. The paradigm displayed here is familiar from later films. For instance, Sir John is to Fane much as Devlin is to Sebastian in **Notorious** (1946), as Keane (and, in the background, the sadistic 'hanging judge', Horfield) is to Latour in **The Paradine Case** (1947), and as Sam is to Norman Bates in **Psycho**. Each time, the outwardly weaker, possibly homosexual, character wins a measure of our sympathy, typically because of the way the 'straight' character too readily, or brashly, assumes a superiority over him. And when the straight character nevertheless wins the ultimate contest, with a woman as prize, the aggression involved is such that the audience feels only a very mixed satisfaction (In this connection, though, you can't easily forget Hitchcock's private admission to Bernard Herrmann that he would have **enjoyed** being 'a hanging judge'. See 'MacGuffin' 8.)

The novel on which **Murder!** is based, Clemence Dane and Helen Simpson's 'Enter Sir John' (1929), is explicit about actor-manager Sir John's mixed motives, first in questioning the conviction for murder of the actress Martella Baring (the film's Nora), then in determining to track down the real culprit. And the book ends with Sir John relishing the publicity value of the lavish engagement party he is staging for himself and Martella. In fact, he freely acknowledges his self-interest. Yet I can't agree with Zizek who says (p. 246) that 'the shocking authenticity' of Fane's death shows up 'Sir John's activity [as] mere performance and his discourse [as] mere semblance'. On the contrary. Although Sir John has fallen into lazy bachelor ways and set professional habits,[5] it's emphasised in both novel and film that once he's aroused by Nora's/Martella's plight, he legitimately decides to apply the skills of his art to real life, and that this enterprise is what eventually 'saves' both of them. Closer to Hitchcock's own understanding, I suspect, is the view expressed by philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) and quoted by Eric Bentley in 'The Life of the Drama':

> To embroider upon experience [i.e. to play or act] is not to bear false witness against one's neighbour, but to bear true witness to oneself.[6]

Such a non-Puritanic notion of maturity (as Bentley calls it) would seem to bring us straight to the heart of the film/theatre experience. Of course, one reason that such films as **Murder!**, **The 39 Steps** (1935), **Stage Fright** (1950), and **I Confess** (1953) climax in a theatre is to give us the (levelling) reminder that 'all the world's a stage'. But there's also an ironic reason: the 'villains' of these films (Fane, Professor Jordan, Jonathan Cooper, Otto Keller) are characters who either have themselves been rendered mute or have been denied access to any form of public platform, or have been forced to shun 'exposure' altogether. Hence, if these scenes constitute, in Zupancic's Lacanian phrase, the inscription of truth 'in the symbolic universe of the film' (p. 81), by the same token I don't think we should overlook the complex moral weight they carry.

Hitchcock's own ambivalence regarding some of the matters touched on above - among them, the 'responsibility' of the artist who plumbs a 'private' inner space - is most apparent in **Rope** (1948). The collusion of two sadistic young killers, Brandon and Phillip, provides a case where two heads are definitely **not** better than one; rather, theirs is the worst kind of **folie à deux**. Nor can their crime be said to have redeeming features, despite the witty 'theatricality' with which they at once display and conceal it. (The single set evidently represents a stage, but only at the end does the Symbolic make its presence felt. Before then, the Imaginary has had free play.) Moreover, an older - and lamed - character, Rupert, is effectively both the boys' guilty 'parent' and a surrogate for the film's audience which itself isn't 'innocent' of the crime committed. I wish that Zizek's book had more closely investigated these various matters of conscience, and especially those which seem to bear on the filmmaker's (as opposed to the audience's) view of things.

In a 'Schopenhauerian' interpretation, **Rope** may be seen to proceed as if the initial crime symbolised the

murderous nature of Will itself; the subsequent 'theatricality', in which everyone participates with varying degrees of irresponsibility, the play of Representation; and the film's climax, a glimpsed fusing of Will **and** Representation - noumenon and phenomenon - in a healthier understanding, which nevertheless must always remain both tainted (as in Original Sin) and partial, unless some saintly being, or an exceptional artist, escapes the ties of Will altogether. Clearly, Rupert is no such being, as we're reminded in several ways. For instance, in denying Brandon the status of God ('Did you think you were God, Brandon?'), he thereby denies it to everyone else as well. In firing the gun at the end, to summon help, his resort to such a firearm is ambiguous, and virtually signals his complicity in his own wounding in the war. (He has sustained a further wound - to his hand this time - in wrestling the gun from Brandon, moments earlier.)

Several times Zizek's book uses a **virtual** Schopenhauerian terminology, as when he says (p. 222) that 'Once the viewer is filled out with the Will-to-Enjoy, Hitchcock closes the trap by simply realising the viewer's desire ... [whereupon] the viewer obtains more than he/she asked for (the act of murder in all its nauseous **presence** ...)'. Here Zizek cites not **Rope** but the murder of Gromek in **Torn Curtain** (1966). Later, returning to **Psycho**, he draws on the classics and mentions 'the veil painted by Parrhasius which brings forth the illusion of the content hidden behind it ...' (p. 257). Such a veil functions, in Zizek's view of Hitchcock, like the veil of Maya (illusion) to which I referred when analysing **Torn Curtain** in 'MacGuffin' 8. Overall, we may note that where Lacan (and therefore Zizek) modifies Kant by claiming that 'beyond appearance there is not the Thing-in-itself, there is the gaze', Schopenhauer also modifies Kant by identifying the Thing-in-itself with Will and saying that 'beyond' it there is just mystery or ... what you will (which, though, can only be mere '**phenomenon of the brain**' - see below). True, if you were to suspend your willing for even a moment, as Schopenhauer says superior art sometimes allows, you might glimpse various pure Ideas of truth, no doubt including the suprasensible Idea of Reason - which is what Zizek tells us the Lacanian psychoanalyst represents (p. 262) ...

* * *

Another Lacanian term employed by Zizek is 'destitution subjective' (p. 254), implying: to (attempt to) be rid of subjectivity, i.e. of what Schopenhauer would call the state of willing. (Recall that Kierkegaard, who had read Schopenhauer, praised Shakespeare for his 'objectivity'.) Zizek tells us that Hitchcock's use of 'God's-eye' high-shots, as in **Psycho** when the camera looks down on the landing where Arbogast is killed, represents such an attainment, and '**is needed to clear the field of all subjective identifications**'. Further, 'it is only on this condition that the subjective point-of-view shot which follows it [of Arbogast's slashed face] is perceived not as a view of one of the diegetic subjects [i.e. of one of the characters] but as the impossible gaze of the Thing [i.e. of the murderous, and mysterious, 'Mother']'. With this reference to 'the Thing' (defined on p. 46 as implying an object 'endowed with sublime and lethal materiality'), we return, in effect, to the notion of 'the stain' (cf. p. 256) - although I wish (1) that Zizek had explained how the use here of a sudden cut from an extreme long-shot to an extreme close-up differs from Hitchcock's use of the same technique on many other occasions (e.g. the start of the scene with the farmer in **Torn Curtain**); and (2) that someone had reminded him that it isn't really 'Mother's' viewpoint we cut to from the high-shot, but that of Norman, a diegetic subject, **dressed up** as 'Mother' ...

Still, speaking of 'God's-eye' shots ... Hitchcock sometimes uses them in a way that is distinctly 'Schopenhauerian'! The memorable overhead view of Bodega Bay in **The Birds** (1963) always reminds me of a passage, cited in Magee's Schopenhauer book, from Turgenev, involving a view 'of the earth as seen from above, when the humans look small and unimportant and are locked in eternal struggle with blind forces which they cannot control'.[7] Turgenev's inspiration for that passage was the opening paragraph of the second volume of 'The World as Will and Representation', in which Schopenhauer reminds us that even from this 'godly' perspective what we see can still only be '**phenomenon of the brain**, [a view] ...encumbered by so many great and different **subjective** conditions that its supposed absolute reality vanishes ...' It may be significant that Zizek describes the shot in **The Birds** in a practically identical manner, although naturally his terminology is Lacanian:

> as soon as the birds enter the frame from behind the camera, the neutral 'objective' shot turns into the 'subjective' shot rendering the gaze of the obscene Thing, i.e. of the killing birds (p. 256)

Like 'Mother', the birds are both mysterious and murderous - so again we may seem free to choose either a

Schopenhauerian or a Lacanian interpretation. Notice, however, that Zizek doesn't draw the **other** principal lesson of the shot, the one concerning the relative unimportance of the humans running around 'blindly' on the ground ...

Here it seems fitting to turn to Hitchcock's **The Wrong Man** (1956), one of the director's most overtly Catholic films. Renata Salecl's essay on it, called 'The Right Man and the Wrong Woman', makes some acute and interesting comments, which I'll discuss shortly. But first, let's note how there's a sense in which the above-described shot from **The Birds** is at least doubly 'humbling'. Not only does the distant view of Bodega Bay make the disaster which strikes the town seem relatively unimportant, but we're reminded by the necessarily-subjective nature of the shot that we can't know the 'true' nature of what we see. Related to this, and perhaps more telling, is how birds are themselves terrestrial creatures which - as the character Mrs Bundy says - 'have been on this planet since archaeopteryx', i.e. since Jurassic times, and therefore long before humans! Now, in 'MacGuffin' 6 I described a pronounced 'evolution' motif operating in **The Wrong Man**, and noted how the characters barely begin to intuit the nature of the time-space-causality nexus which gives us our (subjective) knowledge of the world. Renata Salecl's otherwise stimulating essay misses some of this, and in particular misses some of the film's moral dimension.

Yet her weighty main argument, which certainly has moral implications, is this: Rose Balestrero's breakdown is an extension of her husband Manny's own, unacknowledged, 'psychosis' whereby he has striven to be the 'perfect father'. Salecl is quite specific about the mechanism which causes the family's disaster, and she shows how Manny's wrongful arrest for armed robbery is no more than the switch which sets that mechanism going. All along, Manny hasn't just sought to be a perfect or 'ideal' father; unconsciously, he has **denied** that achieving such a goal is impossible, i.e. that he's fallible. Moreover, the guilt which should attend Manny's denial has in him been totally **foreclosed** (p. 190). As Salecl puts it, 'Manny does not enter the dimension of guilt at all: he does not enter the relationship of symbolic debt'. Consequently, it's his family who bear the guilt instead.[8]

This may sound very conjectural. Nevertheless, the essay seems to me to be an insightful one, and to illuminate areas of Hitchcock's work generally.[9] I found myself remembering Edith Head's description of Hitchcock as a 'Rock of Gibralter' - and how a prominent Catholic acquaintance of mine once saw fit to describe himself the same way![10] A Rock of Gibralter, implies Salecl, is exactly what Manny aspires to be to his family, only in his case the end-result is that Rose 'assumes the role of a "public" madwoman [in order that] **his** madness can continue to wear the public mask of normality' (p. 193).

In short, Manny is another of Hitchcock's characters who tries to be God (or, at any rate, Christ). He seems to have misread his position as head-of-the-family which bestows on him Lacan's 'empty symbolic function of the Name-of-the-Father' (p. 190). Well, Hitchcock readily admitted to Truffaut that a fiction-film director should **play** at being God - no doubt having in mind the various aspects of a film that must be staged, or stage-managed. He also seemed willing in later years to go along with the public's image of him on the set as a kind of portly Buddha, all-seeing yet seldom moving! After reading Salecl, I think it likely that Hitchcock's films reflect certain dangers inherent in performing the 'master's' role. As to how conscious he was of making any such self-disclosure, that's another matter.

I'm saying that Salecl's essay stimulates us to modify, and expand, some of our previous thinking on Hitchcock, and therein lies its principal value. Its interpretation of **The Wrong Man** offers an informed explanation of Rose's breakdown,[11] which hitherto has looked to most viewers too sudden and unconvincing when it happens two-thirds of the way through the film. (Salecl doesn't say so, but perhaps the fact that the breakdown **does** seem so sudden is an indication that Hitchcock himself had only dimly come to grips with the phenomenon it represents.) Even so, the essay isn't always quite accurate. Salecl is wrong to claim that Manny never feels 'a single shred of guilt ... or ... a feeling of self-reproach' (p. 187). After Rose has entered a sanitarium, Manny tells his mother that 'You'd all be better off without me'. His mother responds by urging him to pray for strength, and soon afterwards the 'right man' is caught, signalling at least a partial alleviation of the family's nightmare.

Which may return us to the matter of a moral dimension. I would maintain that the fairest way of reading the film is to see both Manny **and** Rose as 'people who know too little'. I don't agree with Salecl (p. 186), nor with Zizek (cf. p. 218), that '**the story [of The Wrong Man] leaves us indifferent**' - even if, on this

occasion, Hitchcock (somewhat like my Catholic acquaintance!) didn't exactly care to spell out his own limitations. One of the intriguing, even vertiginous, things about the film is how the very possibility of its director's being no less 'blind' than everyone else is artfully built into the film (see 'MacGuffin' 6) - a film whose admittedly bleak message includes how we are all flawed creatures, and weak.

Salecl splendidly describes the woman's psychology in **The Wrong Man**. What she doesn't appear to see is how Manny could so easily have followed Rose 'over the edge' by the film's end. In this ending there's a foretaste of **Vertigo** (1958),[12] and also some sort of parallel with **North by Northwest** (1959), if Frederic Jameson's reading of the latter film as climaxing on the 'edge' of a world is an indication.

* * *

Jameson's 'Marxist/Lacanian' essay is fittingly included in Zizek's book. I hope to review Jameson's own book, 'Signatures of the Visible', in a forthcoming 'MacGuffin', and will simply note here, with a brief comment, that his piece on **North by Northwest** mirrors several of the essays around it, thus: in each case, the reader must negotiate an elaborate theoretical edifice (what Lacan calls a 'lure'?) in order to arrive at ... a modicum of insight. For example, Jameson says helpfully that the various locations used in **North by Northwest** (including the, in 1959, newly-built Seagram Building in New York) may represent other - therefore all - parts of America. Mount Rushmore may stand in for the Rockies, etc. But why stop there? Something not remarked by Jameson is the film's 'picaresque' element, initially announced both by the title itself (see 'Odd Spot' in this issue) and by Saul Bass's 'arrowed' lettering of that title. Such an element runs through the film, inviting us to read the successive landscapes in terms of their fictional 'archetypes'. Notably, the Mount Rushmore climax can be read as the equivalent of the cave or mountain climaxes in novels like Haggard's 'King Solomon's Mines', Kipling's 'Kim', Buchan's 'Prester John', and Laurens van der Post's 'Flamingo Feather' - the latter at one time a work scheduled to be filmed by Hitchcock for MGM but later displaced by **North by Northwest**.[13]

Incidentally, having located Hitchcock's film in an English 'picaresue' tradition - whose roots might be traced to Bunyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress' - let's note that such a tradition sufficiently accounts for an element of 'predestination' in Hitchcock's work - for which Zizek invokes, instead, the director's alleged 'Jansenism', i.e. a Continental influence (see p. 211ff).[14] I'll come back to this point.

To return to Jameson. Not without some straining, his analysis of **North by Northwest** notes (pp.64-5) two instances of 'a grid of parallel lines': on the ground (mainly - but also in the sky) during the crop-dusting sequence, and on the rock-face of Mount Rushmore. He concludes:

> what is confirmed by this pattern, and scored into the space of the scene, is the primacy of surface itself: the earth as a surface upon which the ant-like characters move and agitate, the sky as a surface from which intermittently a mobile and deadly technological mechanism dips ... (p. 64)

Actually, grids of parallel and intersecting lines figure repeatedly in the film from its titles-sequence onwards, and surely connote much more than Jameson allows. In particular, they suggest the ubiquitous and 'deathly' Symbolic - which is represented by the cross-hatched fronts of city buildings, by the bus-stop at a prairie crossroads, even by a pine plantation of upright young trees overlooked by the Mount Rushmore monument.[15] Importantly, whatever 'primacy of surface' exists here may be said to emanate from the superficial Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) himself. But there's a further point. In Thornhill's case, this inadvertent 'pilgrim' - who acts like a buffoon - really does 'progress'. Hence the film has another 'lines' motif (not noted by Jameson) which corresponds to Thornhill's incessant use of vehicles - lifts, taxis, cars, trains, buses. It's like a thread which he must follow through a maze, and which momentarily becomes visible early in the film when he steers the stolen Mercedes (planted on him by Vandamm's men) along the centre-markings of the road; next, arrested for drunk driving, he has to walk a line chalked on the floor by a police doctor. Of course, the film never tells us if Thornhill's ultimate end is 'predestined'; yet the very locales that signal the clutching Symbolic also have another characteristic - they become increasingly 'three-dimensional', i.e. less 'superficial' ...

I've spelt out this 'picaresque' design because it finally seems to oppose Jameson's interpretation. To my mind, **North by Northwest** recalls Professor Alan Sandison's reading of Kipling's 'Kim',[16] a reading which

sees the novel as containing two different but related 'wheels' motifs. On the one hand, there's the great Wheel of Life itself. On the other hand, there are countless lesser wheels such as a humble turnstile which the novel mentions twice. Near the end, this passage occurs:

> [Kim] peered at the cross-legged figure [of his lama friend], outlined jet black against the lemon-coloured drift of light. So does the stone Bodhisat sit who looks down upon the patent self-registering turnstiles of the Lahore Museum.

'By such parallelisms', suggests Sandison, 'as wheel against Wheel, ... road against Way, the concrete is balanced against the abstract, ... the particular against the universal.' **Mutatis mutandis**, a similar process operates (I suggest) in **North by Northwest**, giving it a moral dimension which the 'postmodernist' Jameson seemingly would exclude. (As to what exactly constitutes the moral dimension of Hitchcock's film, that's another issue. Certainly one could draw parallels with the Lacanian and Schopenhauerian themes of **Rope**.)

* * *

I want to single out Pascal Bonitzer's essay on 'Hitchcockian Suspense'. 'The essence of Hitchcockian suspense' he tells us,

> is eroticism, and Hitchcockian editing is an erotic editing. As is well known, Hitchcock makes films about the couple, and what interests him in couples is, more specifically, coupling, or what he terms love 'at work'. (p. 24)

Bonitzer adds that watching the couple gives us a stake in the film. We're like the third party, the gaze, that welds the couple together (p. 26). Here you may think of Freud's remark (in 'Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious') that a joke must be told to someone else - and regular 'MacGuffin' readers may recall that an analogy between Freud's mechanism of the (tendentious) joke and the workings of suspense has been suggested here before (in 'MacGuffin' 5). Having now read Bonitzer, I would add a slightly broader perspective to that earlier suggestion. It's this. If Hitchcock's couple implies a third party, the watching 'I', such an arrangement may in turn imply a 'fourth' party, the audience as mass. Certainly Hitchcock was very conscious of such a factor. To an interviewer, he once described how the collective mind of the film audience isn't a thinking mind. Rather, the situation is like that encountered by a schoolboy who has asked his father why thunder turns the milk sour. The distracted parent responds, 'Aw, run along and don't bother me.'

Now, in discussing Hitchcockian suspense, it seems important to note just how integral to each film are scenes set in public places, where people gather **en masse**. In fact, such scenes are hardly less integral than the Hitchcockian couple itself. Think of **Notorious** (1946), with its Miami and Rio de Janeiro panoramas and streets, its courtroom episode, its parties, its riding-club and racetrack scenes. The places may not in themselves be either **intellectually** or **erotically** stimulating, exactly, but they definitely carry their own 'buzz' of pleasurable expectation (especially as photographed in sultry textures by Ted Tetzlaff). In terms of suspense, which is a pleasant form of anxiety, such places are - as Bonitzer might say - permissive. (It's okay for Dad to send Junior packing - he's earned himself some fantasy-time, hasn't he?)

Further, I suggested earlier that suspense and hope - hope as in Schopenhauer's 'the life-dream of the man who wills' - are inextricably connected. In the light of Bonitzer's essay, and the above remarks, it's possible to see how a Hitchcock film may generate a situation where the locales seem the very icons of our dream - like the film's stars themselves. Hitchcock frequently went out of his way to choose locales worthy of such iconic status. Examples include the Quebec of **I Confess**, the French Riviera of **To Catch a Thief** (1955), the San Francisco of **Vertigo**. Moreover, the Hitchcockian couple must seem no less worthy of our dreaming, our hope, and preferably should be immortal! When, late in **North by Northwest**, the ageless Cary Grant as Roger Thornhill declares, 'I never felt more alive', he's effectively telling us that he's ready to go and rescue the heroine, Eve, from the death-dealing Vandamm.

Bonitzer, then, seems well justified in saying that the essence of Hitchcockian suspense is eroticism. Yet no less is the essence of Hitchcockian suspense indestructible Will. Having referred in this review to two

famous passages from 'The World as Will and Representation', I may as well refer to one more, the one in which Schopenhauer notes how 'the sexual impulse is the kernel of the will-to-live, and consequently the concentration of all willing' (an impulse which provides 'the basis of the serious and the aim of the joke, the inexhaustible source of wit, ... and the meaning of ... all stolen glances'). The passage concludes:

> in the text, therefore, I have called the genitals the focus of the will.[17]

Not for nothing does **North by Northwest** end with its celebrated phallic (or more accurately, copulation) symbol, the train entering a tunnel. The scene permits a Lacanian reading (like the celebrated one by Raymond Bellour); no less does it invite a Schopenhauerian one.

* * *

I've followed Bonitzer in saying that the existence of 'the couple' implies a third party, the gazing 'I', and have suggested that the third party implies in turn a fourth, the audience-as-mass. The logic of such a progression, though, invites the further consideration that there may be a fifth party! I leave it to the reader to consider whether the implied (I think) 'God's-eye view' has in Hitchcock's films any particular dwelling-place except that unspecified realm which is 'beyond representation', and what meaning (if any) attaches to it.

Of course, both Kant and Schopenhauer have warned us not to talk as if we could **know** what is 'beyond representation', for in that case we would be talking indubitable nonsense. Whether in fact Zizek oversteps by simply **denying** that there's anything there except our mirrored gaze, again I leave it to the reader to decide. I would only note how frequently Zizek pirouettes on the edge, so to speak. On one dismaying occasion, having declared (as we've seen) that **Psycho** forces the viewer 'to **identify with the abyss beyond identification**', he goes on to remark (p. 226) that the key to the film thus rests 'in the rupture, ... the change of modality, that separates the first third from the last two-thirds (in accordance with the "golden section" whereby the ratio of the smaller to the larger part coincides with the smaller part to the whole)'. Thank you, professor![18]

Zizek is wrong in saying that 'according to [Stephen] Rebello's **Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of "Psycho"**, [Edward Hopper's painting] "House by the Railroad" ... served as the model for the "mother's house"' (p. 231). In fact, Rebello's book does no more than speculate on the **possibility** of such an influence.[19]

One way to sum up this ground-breaking, but only intermittently rewarding, book is to simply note that Hitchcock scholars need to be aware of it. Here's a caveat, though. Anyone who doesn't already have some sort of background in Lacan might be advised to delay reading Zizek until they've first attempted 'The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis' (or at any rate a good paraphrase of Lacan's thought).

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Notes

1. Bonitzer, of course, is a screenwriter these days. He and Jacques Rivette recently collaborated on the latter's **La Belle Noiseuse**.

2. B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 197.

3. Magee, p. 222. The quotation in this passage is from Schopenhauer's 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. I.

4. Recall Andrew Marvell's 'To his Coy Mistress', quoted earlier in the text. Towards the lady in his poem, Marvell's attitude is much as Schopenhauer's was towards Kant - necessarily down-to-earth!

5. The novel seems, in its depiction of Sir John, to be satirising those successful London actor-managers like Sir Gerald du Maurier who, at about the time of World War I, expressed their distaste for touring and who 'depended entirely on their West End runs'. Cf. J.B. Priestley, 'The English' (1975), p. 118.

6. G. Santayana, quoted in E. Bentley, 'The Life of the Drama' (1969), p. 185.

7. L. Schapiro, 'Turgenev: His Life and Times', quoted in Magee, p. 381.

8. My article on **The Wrong Man** in 'MacGuffin' 6 quoted Carl Jung: 'The perfect has no need of the other, but weakness has, for it seeks support and does not confront its partner with anything that might force him into an inferior position and even humiliate him. This humiliation may happen only too easily when idealism plays too prominent a role.' Renata Salecl's essay has given me a fuller appreciation of the extreme pertinence of Jung's observation to Hitchcock's film.

9. Here, in view of Salecl's emphasis on Manny's 'psychosis', the following consideration seems worth quoting. 'Although many of [psychoanalyst] Melanie Klein's concepts remain unproven and unprovable,' writes Anthony Storr, 'her belief that "psychotic" mechanisms underlie and affect the emotional attitudes of "normal" people is convincing.' (A. Storr, 'The School of Genius', 1988, p. 100.)

10. Edith Head's description of Hitchcock, whom she obviously admired, was made to me when I met her in Melbourne, Australia. Later we came together again, at Universal Studios in Hollywood.

11. Salecl is a Researcher at the Institute for Criminology at the University of Ljubljana.

12. I'm thinking of how Hitchcock once told an interviewer that Scottie (James Stewart), at the end of **Vertigo**, might follow Judy (Kim Novak) and leap to his death from the mission bell-tower.

13. In making **North by Northwest** for MGM - his only film for that studio - Hitchcock seems to have been well aware of a certain Metro tradition of action-adventure and fantasy films, from **Trader Horn** and **The Wizard of Oz**, say, in the 1930s to **King Solomon's Mines** and **Kim** in the 1950s.

14. Cf. O.B. Hardison's essay, 'The Rhetoric of Hitchcock's Thrillers', in W.R. Robinson (ed.), 'Man and the Movies' (1969), p. 143. Professor Hardison likens the world of Hitchcock's thrillers to the Calvinist City of Man, and cites the Gothic novel, Dickens's 'Bleak House' and 'Our Mutual Friend', and the Scottish poet James Thomson's 'The City of Dreadful Night'.

15. In 'MacGuffin' 1, I noted a similar motif in **Vertigo** whereby wherever Scottie goes, even Muir Woods, there are signs of human presence, human intervention.

16. Professor Sandison, author of 'The Wheel of Empire', edited and wrote the Introduction for the Oxford 'World's Classics' edition of 'Kim' (1987). See especially pp. xviii-xxi.

17. Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. II.

18. As we're discussing **Psycho**, a question arises: would you buy a used car from this man?

19. Cf. S. Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (1991), pp. 68-9.

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BLOOPERS

The corrector corrected. A few copies of 'MacGuffin' 9 contained the embarrassing slip in which author Robert Stam ('Hitchcock and Bunuel', in 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films') was taken to task for his use of 'Bretonian'. He had just referred to the '"English" absurdism of **The Trouble With Harry**', and I took his use of the phrase 'Bretonian **humor noir**' to be referring back to that. Of course he was alluding to André Breton (1896-1966), the founder of the surrealist movement.

Likewise, in 'MacGuffin' 8, I made a point of 'putting back' an exclamation-mark in the title of Larry Cohen's (acute and excellent) **It's Alive** (1974) which had never been there ...

Last issue, Evan Williams's description of the baggage-car scene in **The Lady Vanishes** referred to Michael Redgrave's impersonation of 'Mr Chips'. In fact, Redgrave was imitating the character-comedian Will Hay doing his famous schoolmaster routine in a film such as **Good Morning Boys** (1937). Also, Evan overlooked another of Redgrave's impersonations in the same scene, of a top-hatted detective (Raffles?, The Toff?).

If anyone was puzzled by the reference last time to Slavoj Zizek's 'Enjoy Your Symptom' (Routledge, 1992), note that the same book was published simultaneously in the US as 'Looking Awry' (MIT Press). Thanks to the Electric Shadows Bookshop in Canberra for confirming this.

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Luminous Alicia, Sore Devlin, Poor Alex: Around 'Notorious' (1946)

Notorious remains, for me, one of the most compelling and mysterious of Hitchcock's films.[1] As a 'three hander' tracing the shifting, dramatic relationships between a group of characters - Alicia (Ingrid Bergman), Devlin (Cary Grant) and Alex (Claude Rains) - it has proved remarkably open to different responses, different readings. It is particularly striking that while virtually all critics agree that Hitchcock's central strategy is to shift the narrational 'point of view' throughout the film - favouring one character and then another, creating a mosaic of viewer identifications - almost none concur on exactly where and how this happens, and which particular characters Hitchcock is favouring in any one scene.

In accounts that stress the insidious workings of patriarchal ideology in the film (including those by Michael Renov,[2] or myself in 1979), the point of view belongs essentially to Grant, and his various male 'delegates' (such as the reporters and state agents seen in the opening courtroom scene). For Tania Modleski,[3] in her balanced and sophisticated assessment, the gaze may start off as male, but is soon converted into Alicia's point of view upon her entry into Alex's sinister household. However, in the final twist of her analysis, Modleski reminds us of the imagery of Alicia's 'impaired vision' (hair in her eyes, hung over, upside-down view of Devlin) that returns with a vengeance in the final movement of the story, when Alicia is full of poison and Devlin well and truly drives the action to its conclusion. And what of Alex? While I concluded in 1979 that the film effectively denies all point of view avenues to him, William Rothman sees a key transfer, in the second half of the film, from Alicia's subjectivity to Alex's.[4]

Analyses of **Notorious** over the last two decades have oscillated - sometimes uneasily and unconsciously - between two rather different understandings of cinematic identification. The more recently influential theories of identification (or 'enunciation') circulating since the mid '70s stress the literal, mechanical structures of point-of-view sequencing - subjective 'first person' shots, which character is favoured in shot-reverse shot volleys, and so on - as if one could quantify or tabulate our emotional involvement as 'interpellated' spectators by a textual analysis that rendered all the supposedly 'invisible' devices of classical Hollywood cinema visible, and thus culpable. **Notorious**, like all Hitchcock's films, has indeed many subjective shots, of various scales and sorts (some of them are in fact quite ambiguous - is it Alicia or Devlin, for instance, looking over at the roadside cop?), and many intricately patterned shot-reverse shot dialogue exchanges that repay close scrutiny.

But an older style of criticism - one that is perhaps returning increasingly to the agenda to the agenda of serious film study in a revised mode - would pose the question of cinematic identification in a broader and more flexible way. From Robin Wood's original 1966 edition of 'Hitchcock's Films' to the case studies offered by George Wilson in 'Narration in Light', the working assumption is that the filmmaker's attitude towards events and characters that he or she presents can only be intuited by a spectator from a gestalt of many stylistic variables - **mise en scene**, the emotional 'weighting' of a scene, its associations, suggestiveness, tone, texture - which can artfully shift or colour our emotional involvement and our complex, partial, ongoing, evolving identifications.[5] Explicitly marked point-of-view devices would only be one strategy - and sometimes an ambiguous or devious one - within this broad framework of identificatory processes.

It is almost mind-boggling to scan the literature on this film, and lay out an array of the different identifications (or investments) that have been made in relation to its key characters. Consider Alicia - or rather, consider the conjunction on the surface of the screen of the character of Alicia and the star

figure of Ingrid Bergman. She is a creature of light - shimmering in black and white and shades of grey, caught in sudden, breathless soft focus close ups, swimming in pools of light (and with a low, musical voice that is often placed extremely close to the microphone, as if whispering seductively in the viewer's ear). Commentators on the film invariably describe her as radiant Alicia, luminous Alicia. But what exactly does this light reflect or illuminate?

To Michael Atkinson, writing in the 'Sex, Sex, Sex' issue of 'Movieline',[6] Alicia is a sizzling role model for modern film goers. Hitchcock's 'fleshiest object of desire', Alicia is 'a willful party beast trapped in the body of the girl next door'. 'You can see the little girl in Bergman's bruised gaze as clearly as you can see the man-hungry trollop trying to wipe away countless disappointments by throwing her legs open to any smoothie with a new bottle and a fresh line'. Ignoring altogether the presence of Alex in the plot, Atkinson derives from the dynamics of the Alicia-Devlin relationship the line that '**Notorious** becomes, at least on one level, a study of [Alicia's] appetite for nooky and her struggle to regain control over her own body'. This Alicia - who 'radiates haunted, impatient anxiety' - is, in the final staircase scene, 'blissed out, struck dumb with longing ... female desire stripped of barriers, a delirious testament in a conservative era of a woman's will to fuck'.

Laura Mulvey, in her 1992 article 'Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity', is a little more circumspect as she enters a discussion of **Notorious** via the opening courtroom scene, and the striking introductory shot of the behatted Alicia. 'Ingrid Bergman ... is filmed with the privileged codes and conventions that Hollywood has reserved, regardless of stylistic changes, for the female star'.[7] Some critical references to the film pretty much leave the matter at that - case closed, **Notorious** is a typical example of the 'classical Hollywood text' and its abject ideology. Yet although Alicia may be initially positioned, in this most familiar way, as the pristine object of the male gaze and the living 'mask' of feminine mystery and artifice, a mythic Pandora, Mulvey sees a conversion staged in the body of the film's plot: like Pandora, Alicia becomes the bearer of not so much a scopic drive as an epistemological hunger, a desire to explore, question, unravel the terms of her own (deadly) positioning within a specific male fantasy. And Modleski, as we shall later note, takes this enquiry into a speculative 'female spectatorship' of the film further still.

Alain Bergala, in the course of his contribution to the wonderful recent book 'Jean-Luc Godard: Son + Image', suggests a very different view of Hitchcock's luminous images of Ingrid Bergman in **Notorious** (as well as the other films he made with her). As Bergala notes, Godard has frequently used charged, 'star' images (still and moving) of Bergman in his recent film, TV and video 'essays', such as the fragment broadcast by Australia's SBS in the 'Art of Video' series. According to Bergala, what is at stake for Godard in this pinpointing of specific images from Hitchcock is the fleeting moment when the truly 'visual' triumphs over the merely 'visible' - when 'the filmmaker, suddenly inspired, forgets all habits, becomes oblivious to codes', causing us to really **see** something (or someone) as if for the first time. Bergala's beautiful description of what he calls the 'Hitchcockian skid' is worth quoting in full:

> The Hitchcockian look is sometimes allowed to ignore the master's main concern, for the 'spectator's direction', and reveal what his obsession with a perfect economy of readability forced itself precisely to repress: his relation to the body of the actress, for example, whenever she took precedence, in the drive to shoot, over the function of the shot in the scene. These Hitchcockian skids have given us some of his visually most unforgettable shots.[8]

John Beebe, by taking a Jungian approach to the film in his article 'The Notorious Postwar Psyche', comes up with yet another angle on the character of Alicia. She is once more the creature of light, except that now '[h]er troubled radiance suggests the ideal vibrancy of an archetype of life being poisoned by doubt and shame'. To Beebe - drawing on the background information on the films' production supplied by Leonard Leff in 'Hitchcock & Selznick' - Alicia is the heart and centre of the film, because the whole script grew from Hitchcock's and writer Ben Hecht's intense psychic investment in her as an archetype, an anima figure through which they could work out the moral uncertainties of their shared historical moment. 'In delineating the twists and turns of her fate, they also managed to formulate for their fantasy figure the deepest concerns, needs, and possibilities of the postwar psyche'.[9]

I have no desire to now pursue a critical 'aggregate' of these different responses to and readings of the

figure of Alicia. There are elements or overtones that I find myself uneasy with in each account. Atkinson's appropriation of the film for a cool, modern sensibility is painfully hip; while Bergala's reverie is carelessly sexist. On a more theoretical plane, I find the Freudian-Lacanian theory of cross-gender identification used by Mulvey and Modleski (to account for how a male viewer might identify with a female heroine) altogether too convoluted and tortuous, as if these kinds of fantasies don't go on fluidly every day. But, by the same token, I find Beebe's invocation of the Jungian anima to explain Hitchcock's investment in Alicia too easy, without a necessary sense of the drama of passage that such gender phantasms can indeed incur. I can't somehow sift and combine these different accounts; they're just too damn incommensurable. Yet I feel equally certain that each response offers something which is deeply true to the film, taken in the complete experience of its systems and textures.

Although less written about, Devlin is a figure who also occasions diverse, virtually incommensurable readings. But again a motif persists: if Alicia is luminous, Devlin is 'sore' - and critics have found different ways of responding to his rigidity, his silence and his brooding hostility. In a discussion among contemporary French filmmakers of the aesthetic line linking Hitchcock, Robert Bresson and Jean-Pierre Melville, Benoit Jacquot (**The Disenchanted**) describes Devlin as a ghostly, 'almost disincarnated' character in the Bressonian manner (crediting Hitchcock as the 'only person who has ever done that with a Hollywood actor').[10] This places Devlin, for Jacquot, somewhere in hailing distance of the mystical, the religious, and the sublime - with the film tracing a trajectory for this character from abjection and self-repression to enlightenment and the acceptance of love (as in Bresson's **Pickpocket**).

For Andrew Britton, in his monograph 'Cary Grant: Comedy and Male Desire', Devlin exists to point up Hitchcock's 'thematic concern with the male need to possess and subjugate female sexuality'.[11] Among the film's commentators, Britton goes furthest in making Devlin's darkest traits explicit: sexual egoism, brutal misogyny, sexual opportunism. Yet what of the eventual change in his character, supposedly for the better? In my 1979 piece, I was willing to see the film's final gesture of 'softening' Devlin as the most insidious ruse of patriarchal ideology. After all, as Modleski affirms in her account, when Devlin swings into action on the stairs as the Oedipal hero with 'the full power of the law behind him', violence returns with a vengeance to his actions - except this time directed at 'shutting out' poor Alex rather than Alicia.

I wonder if another reading of **Notorious**, centring on Devlin and his evolution, is not also possible. A particular line from that final sequence is one of the most resonant of the entire film: 'I was a fat headed guy full of pain ...'. Without abstracting the dramatic situation entirely into a Bressonian reverie, I think one can experience the film (especially in the light of current, New Age 'masculinist' reflection) as a male melodrama, a terse but trembling 'male weepie'. Here, it would join a tradition running from certain of Nicholas Ray's post-World War II films (especially **On Dangerous Ground** and **In a Lonely Place**) to Cronenberg's contemporary horror psychodramas (particularly **Dead Ringers**) - movies that, beginning from an overwhelming sense of masculine guilt and self-loathing, confront a male protagonist with his own inherently violent impulses, and force him to somehow work them out of his system so that he can finally rejoin the world of daily sociality and intimacy (or die unreconciled). **Vertigo**, too, can be approached in this light.

For me, the lesson of all this is clear. **Notorious** veritably demands that we explore our more free-floating, subtle responses to the behaviour of characters and their relationships. The question of point of view, as I have argued, is complex, and constantly unsettled by the film itself. For instance, it may be quite accurate to say that, in some senses, Hitchcock places Devlin in the patriarchal position demanded by the dominant ideology of the post-war period (at times quite literally, as in the famous intro framing the back of his head in blackness at Alicia's party). But is he at all a likable or admirable hero? Alex presents us with a similar paradox; how do we square his obvious generic position in the scenario (as a cloying, slightly creepy, un-American Nazi) with the pathos that Truffaut shares with the director in their famous interview sessions: 'It's rather touching: the small man in love with a taller woman ...'[12]

Notorious seems to be, in short, an extraordinarily open film. It is this openness, especially in relation to the character triangle which is its main subject, that I wish to discuss a little here. I have no wish to simply rehearse the post-structuralist wisdom that all films have multiple meanings, or at least are inevitably subject to vastly different readings according to historic and social context. On the contrary, I do believe that some readings of a film are bound to be better (more sensitive, complete, material, adequate to the complexities of the work) than others. What makes **Notorious** such a unique film is the way it actively creates and structures its own openness.

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This quality of openness is achieved on many levels of the film simultaneously. One of these levels is genre. Like a number of Hitchcock's films (**North by Northwest** especially), **Notorious** does not fit any one Hollywood genre of its time; from whichever way you approach it, it is a fascinating hybrid mapping of elements from several genres. On the most immediate level, the film brings together action genre elements - spies, murders, political intrigue, uranium down in the cellar - with an intensely reflective emphasis on a complex character psychology. At the very least, we'd have to say that the film is both a love story and an action thriller - and thus a Hitchcock movie that fully incorporates at least two of what Evan Williams has proposed (in 'MacGuffin' 9) as 'the three great elements in Hitchcock's work - comedy, romance and suspense', held once more in 'the most delicate equilibrium'.

But we can't let the matter go at that. Reading William Rothman's account of the film, with its use of key terms from Stanley Cavell's interpersonal philosophy like 'acknowledgement' and 'argument' to describe the love relationship of Alicia and Devlin, one is reminded of the two film genres that Cavell has himself addressed, both of which feed so much into **Notorious**, especially via its chosen stars - the romantic comedies of 'remarriage' (where Cary Grant so often featured), and the tragic 'melodramas of the unknown woman' (like the 1944 **Gaslight** with Ingrid Bergman). For if Hitchcock's film brilliantly extrapolates from the hints of a 'dark side' in the Grant persona that were evident in earlier films like **Penny Serenade** (1941), it also locates Bergman inside a tale where she is (in Modleski's chapter title) 'The Woman Who Was Known Too Much'.

Modleski and Dana Polan[13] describe the generic mix of the film in another way. They rightly stress that the emotional drama of the film as it pivots on Alicia evokes the genre of the 'female gothic' - with its familiar themes of masochism, sickness, entrapment in a house, and the ambiguous threat offered by male 'saviours'. This essentially female story is then counterposed 'dialogically' to the masculine thriller adventures that are centred on Devlin and his frankly oedipal struggle with Alex. Modleski sees the shuffling between, and comparison of, differently gendered parts of the film as crucial to its complex emotional effects: for her, the potential distress evoked in the female viewer over Alicia's suffering at the hands of men is not mere masochistic compliance, but serves indirectly to channel the rage that particular women may feel towards patriarchy. And, even better, it may work as a kind of double-back psychic mechanism, whereby the melodramatic anguish generated by the film causes men (both Devlin and male viewers) to suffer a little in turn for the suffering they inflict with such relish.

I'd like to try out one further generic description. The film starts out something like a **film noir**, with its title and opening scenes evoking the perhaps dangerous enigma of Alicia's sexuality and her political affiliations. These ambiguities are soon dispelled, to be replaced by others that centre on Devlin's psychology, or even psychopathology - what does he really want, what does he really feel towards Alicia? - and the twisted, even perverse logic of Alicia and Devlin's relationship. In this respect, the film evokes a less well recognised, more subterranean, less moored genre of the 1940s and 1950s, which could well be called the **film blanc**. In this genre - which includes Preminger's **Angel Face** (1953) and **Whirlpool** (1949), Tourneur's supernatural fantasies made with Val Lewton, and some of Renoir's and Lang's American films - the thriller elements of the plot become attenuated, almost irrelevant, and the mystery explored is invariably the mystery of personal motivations and relationships.[14]

Watching **Notorious**, I am reminded of André Bazin's note on Renoir's contemporaneous **The Woman on the Beach**, a supreme and enigmatic **film blanc**. 'Renoir says that he wanted to portray pure sexual attraction, but between which characters? The sensuality is there certainly, but it goes from one character to another to another like a mysterious ball of fire. We don't know exactly where it is.' And Bazin intuitively links the feel of Renoir's film - 'strange, stubborn, sincere, elusive, obscure' - to its mixing of genres. 'Was not **The Woman on the Beach** conceived and executed in the manner of the mystery film, pressed in its mold but with another material, not at all conventional, rather very personal?'[14] Interestingly, in his book on Renoir, Raymond Durgnat suggests we imaginatively 'transpose the film into Hitchcock's terms' - specifically the Hitchcock of **Vertigo**, which is another 'melodrama of an unknown woman woven into a mystery plot'.[15]

All the **films blanc** I have nominated have an atmosphere of the uncanny - not the dark underworld, but the

naggingly unsettled and unsettling everyday, the well-lit space of a home which is in fact distressingly 'unhomely'. As 'Cahiers' critic and screenwriter Pascal Bonitzer has strongly argued (in 'Hitchcockian Suspense' and his review of **Notorious**), this sense of the uncanny is a key defining feature of Hitchcock's storytelling sensibility. 'The **unheimlich**, or the uncanny, occurs when a known subject suddenly presents an unfamiliar aspect. It is the same, yet it is other'.[17] Bonitzer draws his particular understanding of the uncanny from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, but is an intuition that many Hitchcock commentators have elaborated within their own frameworks, from Durgnat in 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' to Sylvia Lawson in her 1973 article 'Hitch and Unhitch'.[18] The theory of the uncanny even tallies well with one of the popular cliches about the director, that he succeeded in making the most ordinary domestic fixture (like the bathroom) scary.

I view **Notorious** as a film that - by exploiting its hovering, 'intermediate' status between several available genres - circles around its three central characters and the enigmatic logic of their relationships. Another aspect of the film's openness is the space it explores between the 'type' that a character fills - with the more or less determined generic role that this type is allotted in the scenario - and the intricacies of his or her psychology, which allows for an excess and a freedom beyond strict ideological determinism. William Rothman suggests, in a rather metaphysical mode, that Hitchcock constantly shaped his films in 'response to the free actions of the beings within the world of the film ... as if these beings have made private arrangements with the camera - arrangements consonant with their freedom'.[19] I see more tension in the relation between self and role - and also more torment in the 'argument' between the characters and the accommodation of their emotions to the film's style - but I take Rothman's insight as crucial.

Consider the role of Alex in this regard. As a type, he has a clear cinematic, generic pedigree. He is the older, smaller, foreign, sometimes politically reprehensible, perhaps sexually perverse point of a classic Hollywood triangle. There are many personal and/or political fables that position one woman between such a man and another more conventionally heroic one, taking her through to an ultimate moment of choice. **Morocco** (1930, with Marlene Dietrich positioned between Adolphe Menjou and Gary Cooper) and **Notorious** mark two key points in this history; others suggested by John Flaus that fall in the period in-between include **Gilda** (1946), **Flame of the Barbary Coast** (1945), **Casablanca** (1942) and **Deception** (1946, the last two featuring Claude Rains).[20] Like Wolfenstein and Leites in their 1950s book 'Movies: A Psychological Study', Flaus stresses the strict Oedipal logic of many plots of this type: a young man who wins a woman and achieves power and authority by vanquishing the 'weak' father who is his sexual rival. In **Notorious**, Alex's 'aberrant' masculinity is given a crowning twist: not only is he small, Nazi and cultivated, he is also 'castrated' by a monstrous, overbearing mother (played unforgettably by Leopoldine Konstantin).[21]

Yet no viewer who is at all open to the emotional atmosphere of the film can remain satisfied for long with that analysis. The character of Alex seems to bear an emotion, and a meaning, in excess of this strict, determined, social-ideological role. The uniqueness of **Notorious** in this respect became startlingly clear to me when I recently saw Frank Borzage's **Strange Cargo** (1940) on TV. In this scenario, Peter Lorre takes the Alex role in a triangle with Joan Crawford and Clark Gable. In the crowning moment, when Crawford finally deserts Lorre for Gable, we get a final reaction shot of Lorre which is so brief, so insignificant and so forcibly drained of any possibility of identificatory emotion (sympathy, pity, tragedy) that it may as well not be there. The situation, with its moment of choice, is itself a typical one for films within this formula. In **Morocco**, there is undeniable emotion granted the abandoned Menjou, but these feelings run particularly intense at the end of **Notorious**.

Here, our identification seems almost split three ways between Alex, Alicia and Devlin. Or perhaps it is multiplied, in a dazzling enactment of the ambivalent push-and-pull of our conscious and unconscious emotions as participant viewers. 'It goes from one character to another like a mysterious ball of fire. We don't know exactly where it is' - Bazin's words capture the play of our identification as much as a psychological property inherent to the drama itself. And insofar as this 'play' implies a potential freedom in relation not only to individual characters (and their destinies) but also the more transpersonal social roles that these characters represent, it is important to note Dana Polan's conclusion: 'In its variations on a theme, **Notorious** can suggest the permutational openness of the gothic as symbolic form'.

Polan's analysis refers to a feature of the film remarked on by many commentators: the spectre of

interchangeability between Alex and Devlin, the reversal of their 'typed' good and evil positions, especially in their acts of spying and aggression directed at Alicia. There is a system of suggestive rhymes across the length of the film: Alex's poison is prefigured by Devlin's looming, upside-down glass of milk; Devlin's punch is a preview of the brutal 'containment' of Alicia carried out later. In relation to the typical 'wife in peril' scenario of the female gothic (as in **Gaslight**), Polan stresses the uniqueness of **Notorious**, which suggests that '[a]ny man - husband or not, Nazi or figure of benign authority - can be a source of dread'.

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The 'permutational openness' of **Notorious** can be explored on other levels as well. I have referred to the film as a classic 'three-hander' drama. The potentially very rich and flexible structures of triangular stories in cinema have not, to my knowledge, been sufficiently explored by criticism. With three key 'points' in an interpersonal, intersubjective relation, there is always the possibility of suddenly shifting the narrational point of view in a new and surprising way, by taking a subjective angle on events hitherto concealed.

Post-Hitchcock filmmakers like Brian De Palma have often exploited this effect of shifting, sometimes to the point of sheer narrative vertigo (as in **Dressed to Kill**, 1980). A less pyrotechnical example - and thus one closer to the spirit and method of **Notorious** - is Carl Colpaert's three-handed thriller **Delusion** (1990). This film belongs to a modern tradition that grows out of the **films blanc** of the '40s and '50s, including Stephen Frears's **The Hit** (1984), Eric Red's **Cohen and Tate** (1989), and virtually all of Monte Hellmann's movies. As De Palma would, Colpaert structures the moves of the characters in **Delusion** around a MacGuffin (a stash of money in the boot of a car) which the characters have unequal and changing amounts of knowledge about - one character knows when another doesn't, thinks another doesn't know when she does, etc. An important phase in the film is marked by a shift from Jim Metzler as captive, observing with an eagle eye his captors Jennifer Rubin and Kyle Secor, to a disenchanted Rubin removing herself from the jousting of the two men. In a showdown that strangely recalls the finale of Hitchcock's film, Rubin drives up to the two men holding guns to each other in a deadlock, asks whether either is willing to go away with her, and then drives off alone.

In **Notorious**, Hitchcock exploits a simple but brilliant structural device - who, out of the three characters, he chooses to end a scene on. Whenever a film does this - merely by closing a scene on a shot of a character reflecting, 'absorbing' what has come before - it has the effect (ideally) of bringing us closer, for a moment, to that character's subjectivity. Hitchcock rotates this scenographic 'grace note' around all the points of his triangle. Each time it engenders a subtle emotional effect: shots of Devlin alone imply that he is less brutish than his actions towards Alicia have just made out; shots of Alicia draw us closer to her feelings of hurt, and her dilemma in being constantly unacknowledged by Devlin; shots of Alex allow him the kind of pathos denied (as already noted) to the evil, little foreigner in stories of this type.

On top of these shifts around and between the three central characters, Hitchcock superimposes another kind of narrational 'break' - sudden leaps to events occurring outside the space of the triangle, but events which will have a determining effect on its shape, direction and outcome. In Hitchcock, as in Lang or De Palma, these kinds of overarching narrative intrusions often deal with powerful schemers on either side of the law - cops, espionage chiefs, underworld bosses, Dr Mabuse-type madmen in their surveillance centres - who are like chess masters moving character-pieces on the board of the narrative. In **Notorious**, the moments that take us to spy chief Prescott (Louis Calhern) function like this.

Beyond these narrative games, and their various implications, there is a further rich possibility inherent in the three-handed dramatic structure. 'The triangle is the fundamentally vulgar figure' - this line, from Andrzej Zulawski's bizarre horror-psychodrama **Possession** (1981), did not escape the attention of Pascal Bonitzer when he reviewed it. For Hitchcock's triangles, to Bonitzer and several contemporary commentators, are essentially **perverse** configurations - structures where desire slips, treacherously, between one couple and another as they form, break apart and reform within the space of the story. Within a perverse relationship, desire 'never goes straight, one way', as is said in Paul Morissey's **Beethoven's Nephew** (1987) - it goes via detours, masks, calculated exchanges, such as the bargain struck between Holly Hunter and Harvey Keitel in Jane Campion's **The Piano** (1993).

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, desire's perverse detour is particularly pronounced. A relationship between two people is always constituted, perversely, in reference to a third, imaginary or absent, person - and, as Bonitzer notes, Hitchcock conceived even the most intimate moment between Bergman and Grant in **Notorious** as one that crucially included the audience, via his camera, in a 'kind of temporary **menage a trois**'. In a perverse triangle, the excluded 'third point' can be placed in many positions - foolish dupe, pathetic victim, sinister ringmaster, aggrieved lover, vengeful schemer - and can experience many possible emotions, from murderous envy to voyeuristic delight.

Looking back from a contemporary vantage point at what I am calling the **film blanc**, one sees such constitutive perversity in a heightened way, as if a hidden, secret aspect of these films had been suddenly, shockingly, illuminated. Look at Lang's **Scarlet Street** (1945) - with its relentlessly cruel diagram of perverse relations structured on narrative 'delusions', gaps in the characters' knowledge and their differences of 'perspective' - or Jacques Tourneur's **I Walked with a Zombie** (1943). One reason this is so apparent today, specifically in relation to Hitchcock, is that a number of filmmakers who have rigorously applied themselves to the task of 'mutating' Hitchcockian elements into their own style and vision - like Polanski (**Repulsion**, 1965), Almodóvar (**Matador**, 1986), Valeria Sarmiento (**Notre Mariage**, 1984) and Bigas Luna (**Anguish**, 1987) - have stressed, even celebrated perversity as part and parcel of a modern sensibility.

Perhaps the most completely perverse of the 'mutant Hitchcocks' is the French director André Téchiné, an ex-'Cahiers' critic whose regular script collaborator is Bonitzer. Téchiné's **blanc** thrillers - **Hôtel des Amériques** (1981), **Les Innocents** (1989) and the ghost story **Rendez-vous** (1985) - take the homoerotic allusions in **Strangers on a Train** and **Rope** to a perverse logical extreme, creating 'polysexual' character configurations in which repressed homosexuality and bisexuality play a major part.[22] Neil Jordan's **The Crying Game** (1992) is a film which - until its intersubjective tensions fizzle - operates very much in the Téchiné manner, structuring its narrative around an evolving, overlapping series of perverse, murderous and sexually ambiguous triangles.

Perversity also invades the micro-structures of Hitchcock's style - especially his famous 'fetishistic' way of framing and presenting bodily parts. Visual fetishism is a special kind of perverse detour, in which the camera, as it were, 'overinvests' its gaze in a minor or insignificant detail at the momentary expense of the otherwise 'classical' sense and direction of a scene. This is one of the structures that most clearly unites Hitchcock with Luis Bunuel, whose Surrealist method from **Un Chien Andalou** (1929) to **That Obscure Object of Desire** (1977) is largely based on the casual but deadly disruption of conventional scenes by fetishistic deviations and apparitions. (In a Lacanian-influenced essay on Surrealist art - Lacan himself had close dalliances with the Surrealist movement, especially Georges Bataille - Paul Foss cites Bunuel's story of his encounter with Hitchcock, and the latter's rapt appreciation of the amputated limb in **Tristana** (1970): 'Ah, that leg ... that leg'.)[23] This is certainly how Alain Bergala sees the above-mentioned 'skids' of Hitchcock's visual style, with its 'fine collection of perverse shots of women's backs and shoulders'.

Today, the perverse Hitchcockian path through the 'female gothic' laid down by **Notorious** reaches delirious new heights in **The Piano**. Campion stages an absolutely stunning moment - reminiscent of a key image in **Vertigo** - where the camera approaches Hunter from behind, as she dangles her hand in an odd manner, to close in on the tight bun of her hair; this then cuts to a wild, unruly thicket of trees. As in the most hallucinatory passages of Hitchcock's work, it is as if such charged, fetishistic 'nodal points' offer a gateway to the unconscious itself, into which the film eagerly plunges. When a film emerges from these dives, it is itself inexorably transformed by the phantasm it previously sought to circle and describe.

Before discussing further some of the micro-structures of **Notorious**, I want to ask one last macro question. What is the 'theme' of the film? The concept of a theme, so beloved of arts criticism, is best understood here in its most supple and open sense, as a question or proposition which a work poses and explores. Hitchcock, I believe, is a problem for thematic criticism (such as is practised by Robin Wood, for example). It seems fruitful enough to discuss some of his films starting from a broad thematic proposition - **Vertigo** is about the nature of romantic love, **Shadow of a Doubt** explores the hidden aspects of the American family, **Marnie** is about repressed sexual trauma - but others, including **The Birds** and **Family Plot**, obstinately resist this kind of ambit claim. I cited earlier Andrew Britton's assertion about the theme of **Notorious** -

its 'concern with the male need to possess and subjugate female sexuality' - but this seems to me as unsatisfying a statement as Donald Spoto's airy notion that the film deals with 'common humanity'[24]

Criticism, it seems to me, is often too ready to translate the specific materials of a film - the actuality of its characters, events, moods, textures - into a 'higher order' abstraction which is implicitly preferred because it is symbolic and general, not 'merely' singular, sufficient unto the artwork itself. Themes, as construed, are most often symbolic entities of this lofty kind. But I do not believe that filmmakers actually approach what they do in such an abstracted fashion. It is telling that, in the discussion among French directors mentioned earlier, there is much speculation on the **subject** of whichever film comes up, but never a dissertation on its **theme**. (Example: 'the passage from ecstasy to love ... that is a beautiful way of defining the subject of **Pickpocket**').

This is not a merely semantic distinction: a subject is physical, contingent, material, specific, in a way that a theme is not. So, what is the subject of **Notorious**? Beginning from Victor Perkins's description of the embrace between Alicia and Alex in the cellar - 'we are shown (and shown that we are shown) the formality, the passion, the convincing enactment of impulse, and the calculation'[25] - one might define the subject of the film as the mapping of particular, interrelated subjective and intersubjective states: emotional masquerade, suspicion, betrayal, desire, the passage from perverse to direct and authentic expression of love ... In this light, I take the subject of the film to be that 'fundamentally vulgar figure' itself, the character triangle, with every narrative and formal game, every perverse and humanist reflection, that it allows. I don't believe Hitchcock 'says anything' about this triangle - the play of his subject cannot be reduced to a moral statement or conclusion. Indeed, the elusive aura of mystery crucial to the **film blanc** shrouds the subject as much as the characters: watching **Notorious**, we circle the very mystery of its theme, or in Bonitzer's formulation its 'capital secret, which contains all the ambiguities and things which cannot be spoken aloud'.[26]

* * *

There is a tendency, in much Hitchcock criticism, to reduce his films to their set pieces and their 'striking' moments: shower scene, rock face chase, bird attack, dream sequence, etc. Stylistically, this confines Hitchcock's 'touch' to broad effects of montage, bravura camera movements, and 'expressionist' compositions - of the kind seized on and exaggerated by a De Palma. Approaching **Notorious**, this awestruck eye for spectacle pauses over very little of the film: the famous camera movement from the ceiling to the key in Alicia's hand; the long take kissing scene; the final showdown on the stairs; the shot of Alicia imprisoned between Alex and his mother; the movement out from behind Grant's dark head; and not much more. Even Bonitzer's suggestive idea that Hitchcock is an 'architectural' filmmaker who 'dramatizes' the space of a set - transforming it into 'a labyrinth in which everyone - characters, director and audience - loses and finds themselves, in the intensity of their emotions' - does not get us very far off the beaten track of these stylistically heightened milestones.

What is overwhelmingly absent from accounts that fixate on these 'high points' is any holistic sense of the film's **mise en scene** - and any apprehension that **Notorious** is, essentially, a film comprised of scenes of characters talking to each other. Indeed, in this light, it needs to be appreciated as a chamber drama in the manner of Nicholas Ray's **In a Lonely Place**, or indeed many of the **films blanc** like **The Woman on the Beach**. Yet, apart from Rothman's notation of some rather free-floating visual motifs, only Perkins's brief comments serve to hint that **Notorious** is (as Godard said of **The Wrong Man**) 'a lesson in **mise en scene** every foot of the way', and a truly masterful chamber piece.

Here I must take a necessary sidestep. Remakes are always interesting artifacts for study - especially when they are dismal. **Notorious** was remade as a telemovie in 1992 by Colin Bucksey, with John Shea, Jenny Robertson and jean-Pierre Cassel in the lead roles. There is much that could be said about this sorry attempt to 'modernise' the script and its characters, but what is particularly striking for my purpose is the complete absence of any intersubjective tension, any trembling aura of mystery, any uncanny strangeness, in the bland, telemovie **mise en scene** of the remake. This occurs not simply because Bucksey lacks Hitchcock's 'touch'; but above all because the ground rules of verisimilitude, of dramaturgical 'realism', have changed so radically between the Hollywood of 1946 and 1992.

When revisiting the original after viewing the remake, one realises with a jolt how extraordinarily elliptical and abstract Hitchcock's film is, and how astonishingly minimal many of its scenes are. It is this quality which gives the French directors cited earlier the liberty to make the aesthetic comparison between Hitchcock and Bresson, Dreyer or Melville. But this abstraction is not Hitchcock's sole innovation - he was not really, in my view, a modernist straining at the limits of classicism (as was Nicholas Ray or sam Fuller). This attenuated, minimal style is a key feature of the **film blanc**, and even more generally it is characteristic of a certain 'Hollywood studio' manner common to many lesser films, across many genres.[27]

Virtually every scene of the remake loses specific atmospheric qualities and crucial layers of meaning from the original by having to 'fill out' the staging in a manner that will not be jarringly stylised or unrealistic to the contemporary viewer. Thus, in the party scene near the start, Bucksey cannot risk placing Shea's head entirely in blackness, nor even so prominently in the foreground of the shot; and, lacking the licence to so completely 'focalise' the scene on the exchange between Shea and Robertson once this starts getting more intimate, he constantly dissipates the tension by cutting away to business with surrounding party goers. Every stylistic aspect of the remake is 'inflated' to currently realistic standards in a like manner: always more background noise in place of the silences of the original; always some redundant 'in-between' shots of travel to explain the relocation of the characters and their permutations from one situation to another.

Like similar American films of the period, **Notorious** is a remarkably economic movie - tightly articulated to the point of a certain dream-like abstraction. Decades later, it is this same dreamlike permutation of a group of shadowy characters on the logic of what Bonitzer calls a 'strong, disquieting intersubjectivity', that modernist directors like Téchiné, Jacquot and Chantal Akerman will aspire to re-create and enhance. 'Today', writes Bonitzer, 'we are impressed by the power and efficacy of the scenario, and by the mounting intensity bestowed upon it by the staging'. I would go further and suggest that Ben Hechtg's script and Hitchcock's **mise en scene** were conceived and mapped out in an absolutely interdependent relation.

The **mise en scene** of **Notorious** is based on a highly supple and varied but extremely systematic principle. As it happens, I stumbled upon this principle inadvertently, while zipping through the video on fast forward to find a particular scene. In that sped-up mode, it became clear to me that the staging of the film, as a series of dialogue exchanges between couples, is devoted to the edgy impossibility of full, face-to-face intimacy between two people. The variations of this 'face-off' are amazingly inventive: Hitchcock explores just about every possible way that characters can be manoeuvred into a dissymetrical pictorial relation, constantly contriving imbalances in height, position, shape of gesture, direction of movement. This tension invades even the most normally stable of 'classical' filmic figures, the shot-reverse shot volley - in the early party scene, Hitchcock has Bergman in close-up constantly tip so that half her face is obliterated by Grant's shoulder.

Clearly, the systematic 'disequilibrium' of Hitchcock's **mise en scene** bears a close relation to the prevailing **film blanc** atmosphere of the uncanny. Bonitzer notes that, insofar as Hitchcock's films are regularly and almost routinely devoted to the formation of a romantic couple, they develop a particularly fraught and unsettled picture of that couple, right to the very end of the story: many are the instances in the director's work where characters bound in love and hate are pitching to and fro, grasping or struggling for balance, such as in **The 39 Steps** or the kissing scenes in **Notorious** and **North by Northwest**. And it is indeed telling that, at the centre of the **mise en scene** system of **Notorious**, even when Alicia and Devlin are finally locked in face to face embrace in the course of a dazzling sequence shot, Hitchcock introduces every conceivable note of tension, disruption and disequilibrium into an apparently harmonious and resolved continuity.

One can go further. Earlier I noted the palpably perverse presence of a 'third eye' in the gaze of Hitchcock's camera upon the intimacy of the lovers. This relation between characters and the camera can be understood in another way, also. Contrary to Rothman's assertion that the protagonists possess a metaphysical freedom vis-a-vis the camera, I think one can sense that Hitchcock's camera sometimes takes the position of a cold, unblinking, public eye - the social superego spying, recording, making implacably public the private lives and exchanges of its citizens. The figures in **Notorious** give off an air of always and unconsciously performing circumspectly for this social eye; that is one reason why they are turned towards

the world rather than toward each other. A number of Hitchcock's films offer, in this regard, a notion of **mise en scene** quite similar to the one theorised by Jean-Louis Comolli in 1980: a mapping of the changing postures and gestures that unfold 'everywhere where the social regulations order the place, the behaviour and almost the 'form' of subjects in the various configurations in which they are caught'.[28] **Shadow of a Doubt** offers an especially rich and tense map of the 'social **mise en scene**' of family relationships.[29]

If we see the events and exchanges of **Notorious** as taking place in a social realm which is always too public for private intimacy to ever properly begin, the cleverness of Hitchcock's work with Hecht becomes particularly apparent. So many of the scripted scenes are located in spaces where a certain propriety rules even when emotions are simmering - restaurant, bar, racetrack, cab, plane. This propriety is doubled by the masquerades that go on, and contradicted by the emotions that rise up. In these spaces, Hitchcock is able to play in his staging both on the closeness of bodies and their postural 'stand off', the stiffness of the characters and their palpable relief (or frustration) at not having to look directly at each other.

In an even more intricate way, Hitchcock is able to introduce into this behavioural dynamic tiny but dramatic flashes of a 'suspense effect' linking up to the more heightened and action-oriented passages of the narrative: moments where one character suddenly sees and experiences what the other character doesn't, as in the plane scene where Devlin turns back to the front to suddenly find that Alicia has pushed herself across virtually right into his lap. He sees her and we 'enter into' his awareness of her erotic presence, but she does not see or feel what he and we are seeing and feeling. (Again, the almost identically scripted scene in the remake loses virtually all the **mise en scene** dynamic, and thus the entire point, of this exchange.)

* * *

This essay is a fragmentary discussion of **Notorious**. In re-watching the film, I have deliberately held myself back from taking detailed analytical notes on each scene, each shot, as I would naturally have done at other times of my life as a critic. I have not wanted to work towards a systematic textual analysis - one that 'scans' the film and tries to cohere it in the unfolding of its articulations. On the contrary, I have endeavoured to 'circle' the film as I believe the film itself circles its characters, situations, themes.

Perhaps this reticence on my part reflects on matters wider than this one, unique film. I believe that the experience of many great films is injured by a certain form of systematic analysis. It is as if, in the process of trying to approach and intimately understand the workings of a beloved cinematic object, one has somehow reduced its richness, and the reservoir of emotions it prompts in oneself. What is lost in such an act of criticism is not exactly - as the cliche goes - the 'mystery' of the film, but rather what Raymond Bellour once called its **volume**, its multiple resonances, its floating interplay of levels actual and virtual. Film is 'an art of suggestion, of rhetoric, of graphic-semantic construction', as Raymond Durgnat has mused, with 'nine tenths of it exist[ing] below the surface of the film, deep down in the spectator's own mind'.[30]

This state of film's being poses a challenge to the act of critical writing. The attempt to respect and prolong - as well as critically discuss - a certain 'trembling', fragile, emotional quality unique to the film viewing experience is, for me at least, one of the highest tasks bequeathed to the labourers in this field. Clearly, such a mission demands a style of critical writing which is closer to poetic literature than your average academic thesis. Camille Paglia speaks of criticism as 'ceremonial revivification': 'I try not to allude to but to re-create, to reproduce the first, baffling experience of reading a text or seeing a painting or film'. She quotes an aphorism coined by Harold Bloom: 'the meaning of a poem can only be another poem'.[31]

Jean-Luc Godard once coined an equally priceless aphorism when he remarked that a film happens not solely on the screen or in the spectator's head, but in that strange, uncanny space between screen and spectator. Few films demonstrate this relation more profoundly, or command our poetic attention more fiercely, than Alfred Hitchcock's **Notorious**.

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Notes

1. This essay began when Ken Mogg asked me to shorten for 'The MacGuffin' a long article I wrote on **Notorious** back in 1979. Almost nothing of that piece (which is heavily marked by the trends of its historical moment) remains here, but anyone wanting to compare two very different accounts of the film can find the original, 'Reading **Notorious**', in 'Filmviews' 119, April 1984, pp. 5-15. I have tried to reflect, in this essay, some of the most interesting ideas on the film that I have encountered since 1979 - particularly in works by Pascal Bonitzer, Tania Modleski, William Rothman and V.F. Perkins (see references below).

2. Michael Renov, 'From Identification to Ideology: The Male System of Hitchcock's **Notorious**', 'Wide Angle', Vol. 4, no. 1, 1980.

3. Tania Modleski, 'The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory', New York: Methuen, 1988, Chapter 4.

4. William Rothman, 'Alfred Hitchcock's **Notorious**', 'Georgia Review', Vol. 29, no. 4, 1975.

5. For more on this comparison of prevailing critical methods ('expressive' criticism vs. textual analysis), see my article '**Mise En Scene** is Dead, or The Expressive, The Excessive, The Technical and The Stylish', 'Continuum', Vol. 5, no. 2, 1992.

6. Michael Atkinson, 'Role Models: Ingrid Bergman in **Notorious**', 'Movieline', Jan-Feb 1993, p. 87.

7. Laura Mulvey, 'Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity', in Beatriz Colomina (ed.), 'Sexuality and Space', New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, p. 58.

8. Alain Bergala, 'The Other Side of the Bouquet', in Raymond Bellour and Mary Lea Bandy (eds), 'Jean-Luc Godard; Son + Image', New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1992, p. 30.

9. John Beebe, 'The Notorious Postwar Psyche', 'Journal of Popular Film and Television', Vol. 18, no. 1, Spring 1990, p. 30.

10. 'Autour de **Pickpocket**' ('Around **Pickpocket**'), roundtable discussion with Olivier Assayas, Jean-Claude Brisseau, Benoit Jacquot, André Téchiné, Thierry Jousse and Serge Toubiana, 'Cahiers du Cinema' 416, February 1989, p. 31 (my translation).

11. Andrew Britton, 'Cary Grant: Comedy and Male Desire', Tyneside Press, 1984. Reprinted in 'Cineaction' 7, December 1986. The quotation is from p. 38 of the reprint.

12. Francois Truffaut, 'Hitchcock', New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

13. Dana Polan, 'Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940-1950', New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 280-1.

14. For more on the **film blanc**, with Katt Shea Ruben's **Poison Ivy** (1991) as a contemporary example, see my article 'Unlawful Entries: The Anatomy of a Popular Film Cycle', forthcoming in 'Scripsi', late 1993.

15. André Bazin, 'Jean Renoir', New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986, pp. 98-9. See also the Filmography section of this book, pp. 272-3, for Jacques Rivette's appreciation of the film.

16. Raymond Durgnat, 'Jean Renoir', London: Studio Vista, 1975, p. 267.

17. Pascal Bonitzer, '**Notorious**', in Slavoj Zizek (ed.), 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)', London: Verso, 1992, p. 153.

18. Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock, or the Plain Man's Hitchcock', Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974; Sylvia Lawson, 'Hitch and Unhitch', 'Lumiere' 22, April 1973.

19. Rothman, 'Alfred Hitchcock's **Notorious**', pp. 885-6.

20. I thank John Flaus for his private correspondence on this point.

21. I say nothing more in this essay about Alex's mother, and the larger issue of Nazism associated with her. However, as a film at some level about Nazism, **Notorious** is clearly a propagandistic 'fiction of hate', and deserves the same analysis at this level as the similar fictions (Lang's **Hangmen Also Die**, 1943, and Lubitsch's **To Be Or Not To Be**, 1944) treated by Jean-Louis Comolli and historian Francois Géré (for a translated extract, see Steve Jenkins [ed.], 'Fritz Lang: The Image and the Look', British Film Institute, 1981). On another political level, Polan's 'Power and Paranoia' suggests a historical understanding of the 'uncanny' as it operates, in a displaced, metaphoric fashion, in **Notorious** - as an anxiety that attaches itself to the 'unsettled' post-war American home in which the returned serviceman and the suddenly retrenched working woman must now cohabit as if nothing had ever happened.

22. For more on Téchiné and the perverse tradition, see my 'After **Wet Madeline**', 'Tension' 23, Oct-Nov 1990, a review of a short film by Edward Colless, whose article 'Vengeance, Is Mine' ('Agenda' 12, August 1990) is a key text on the perverse impulse in cinema; it cites Hitchcock among the directors who 'trusted their perversions as the essences of their individual expression and style'.

23. Paul Foss, 'Eyes, Fetishism, and the Gaze', 'Art & Text' 20, February-April 1986. Bunuel's anecdote is from his autobiography, 'My Last Breath', London: Fontana, 1985. For more on fetishism and other stylistic 'perturbations' in the films of Bunuel and Raúl Ruiz, see my 'The Impossible Scene', 'Photofile' 38, March 1993.

24. Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock', New York: Doubleday, 1976, p. 162.

25. V.F. Perkins, 'Film Authorship: The Premature Burial', 'Cineaction!' 21/22, Summer/Fall 1990, p. 61.

26. Pascal Bonitzer, 'Une Certaine Tendance du Cinéma Americain' ('A Certain Tendency of the American Cinema'), 'Cahiers du Cinéma' 382, January 1988, p. 38 (my translation).

27. Robert B. Ray's important meta-critical article 'The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy', in James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger (eds), 'Modernity and Mass Culture', Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, uncovers, through a 'surrealist' critical method, 'how elliptical, how witty (in Freud's sense of condensation) cinematic realism is' (p. 243).

28. Jean-Louis Comolli, 'Machines of the Visible', in Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (eds), 'The Cinematic Apparatus', London: MacMillan, 1980, p. 139.

29. See Ronnie Scheib's brilliant article 'Charlie's Uncle', 'Film Comment', March-April 1976.

30. Raymond Durgnat, 'Towards Practical Criticism', 'AFI Education Newsletter', Vol. 4, no. 4, March-April 1981, p. 10.

31. Camille Paglia, 'Sex, Art, and American Culture', London: Viking, 1992, p. 117.

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Frenzy for a Notorious Artist

by Timothy M. Walters

Master of suspense, the rotund auteur
delighted generations with the gift of fear,
advised weary travelers that they would do well
to keep a safe distance from a certain motel.
Ornithological invasions came from the sky,
the birds descended on us, we never knew why.
Political historians defiantly ignore
the day Cary Grant hung on Mount Rushmore.
Rebecca and Carlotta are women of mystery
to all who are current on cinema history.
The master's disciples remember with joy
the mind of Mister Memory, the heart of Miss Froy.
With shadow of a doubt, I confess a suspicion
all are spellbound by the movie master's mission.
If you crave entertainment, rewarding and rich,
before your next film foray, dial H for Hitch.

(Timothy Walters lives in Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA.
His poem originally appeared in 'Calliope',
newsletter of the American Mensa Writers' SIG.)

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Earlier 'MacGuffins' have featured **The Lady Vanishes** (no. 9), **Torn Curtain** (8), **Suspicion** (7), **The Wrong Man** (6), **Number Seventeen** (5), **Psycho** (4), **The Lodger** (3), **Stage Fright** (2), **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** (1).

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ODD SPOT: MISDIRECTIONS

The latest scholar to allude to the title of **North by Northwest**, and get the allusion wrong, is Alenka Zupancic (in 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan', p. 73). She writes that the title of Hitchcock's film 'is taken from Shakespeare's **Hamlet**'. Where Zupancic errs is in supposing that the filmmakers meant to refer to the Danish prince's wild remark, 'I am but mad North, North-West: when the winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw', which is the same error made by Stanley Cavell in 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986) - although in Cavell's case, he didn't stop there but spent further ink on explaining Hitchcock's intentions. The truth is that the film's working-title of **In a North-westerly Direction** was changed by Kenneth McKenna, head of the MGM script department, to **North by Northwest** for want of anything better, although no doubt he intended a punning reference to the name of a well-known airline. 'Any allusion to Hamlet's madness was entirely accidental' (John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch, 1978, p. 248).

These scholars are showing their ignorance in another way, because Hamlet's isn't the only literary reference to the compass-point lying between north and north-west. Chaucer's reference in 'The Parlement of Foules'/ 'The Parliament of Birds' ('As wisly as I saw thee north-north-west,/ When I began my sweven for to wryte,/ So yif me might to ryme hit and endyte!' - ll. 117-9) might just as appropriately as Hamlet's remark be applied to Hitchcock's film - given the latter's considerable resemblance to a crazy dream ('sweven')!

In fact, though, the most probable, or valid, literary resonance of **North by Northwest**'s title is surely its suggestion of a tradition of English adventure-fiction which includes Rudyard Kipling's 'Kim' (1901) and John Buchan's 'Prester John' (1910) - works whose stories invariably move in a northerly or north-westerly direction to a thrilling climax, typically involving spies, in some high and craggy place. For further thoughts on this, see 'Book Review' in this issue.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Vertigo and **The Paradine Case**; Jane Campion; 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality'. Extra items always wanted.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 11 November 1993 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £3

EDITORIAL

In Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps** (1935), memories of the exotic foreign agent who calls herself 'Annabella Smith' (Lucie Mannheim) haunt hero Richard Hannay (Robert Donat) for the entire film, even after he meets the feisty Pamela (Madeleine Carroll). I was reminded of this by some notes on the film sent to me recently by Timothy Walters. Here's what Timothy says about the Lucie Mannheim character:

> The beautiful Annabella Smith is the quintessence of the mysterious espionage figure. She is exotic, sensuous, and haunting. Hannay's abrupt meeting and brief interlude with her are surreal, almost dream-like. His initial disbelief of her fantastic story sets the precedent for Pamela's later skepticism towards him. Annabella's bizarre story, recited in a beguiling accent, draws Hannay into the eye of a deadly spy-storm. Her cryptic reference to the 39 Steps is highly intriguing and the viewer is left to ponder its meaning for the film's duration.

Speaking of 'pondering', you may like to consider - as I've just been doing - how far the above situation (so well described by Timothy) influenced the plot of Hitchcock's great **Vertigo** (1958). It seems to me that the two co-writers of the French novel on which **Vertigo** was based may well have had the earlier film in mind.

If so, that still leaves a surprising number of other influences on **Vertigo** - and it's these that are the subject of the main article in this 'MacGuffin'. They include some nineteenth-century literary works like 'The Lady of the Camellias', and several Hollywood films of the 1940s, especially films directed by German emigrés.

(Not mentioned in the article is an intriguing allusion to be found in the titles-sequence of **Vertigo**. There, the camera moves towards a woman's eye, at which point the screen turns red. Then the camera appears to enter the eye and we see a succession of nine revolving spirals. Finally, the camera exits the eye and again the screen turns red. It seems that we have been taken on a voyage recalling the nine circles of Dante's 'Inferno'. I leave it to the reader to decide the precise significance of this.)

Also featured in this 'MacGuffin' is an article on the recent film **The Piano**, directed by Jane Campion. Academic Freda Freiberg is well qualified to discuss Campion's work, having written about earlier Campion films in the important book she co-authored, 'Don't Shoot Darling!: Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia' (1987).

Last but not least, I congratulate Adrian Martin (who wrote on **Notorious** in our last issue) for recently being declared joint-winner of the prestigious Byron Kennedy Award, made by the Australian Film Institute. Adrian was cited for his 15-year contribution to the Australian film industry as a critic and reviewer.

To everyone, good viewing.

Jon

LETTERS

Brian Magee, King's College, London University, England

It may interest you to know that for nearly 10 years I was the Member of Parliament for Leyton (which includes Leytonstone). Whenever I was asked who was the best-known person who'd ever come from my constituency my answer was always Alfred Hitchcock. (In his day it was in Essex, but now it's well and truly London.) I've seen most of his films, I think, and always enjoyed them.

* * *

Jay Giswein, Highland Park, CA 90042, USA

I am a new subscriber to 'The MacGuffin' and have just received my first issue, no. 10. I am **extremely** satisfied and am interested in purchasing past issues (1-9), if available.

P.S. If you have any information on early (silent) Hitchcock videos, please let me know.

(Editor's note. The 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' mentions that **Easy Virtue**, made in 1927, is available from both Valencia Entertainment Corporation and Video Yesteryear, no addresses given. Presumably these are sources of outright-sale videos, as a separate item gives a rental-only source.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general-interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Losing the plot?

The dinosaurs in **Jurassic Park** were created using computer technology that didn't exist a year ago. Extras in **In the Line of Fire** were digitally multiplied by five in order to boost crowd scenes.

Filmmaking may thus be said to have advanced beyond the table-top and model work of the gifted Ray Harryhausen and George Pal of yesteryear, not to mention the ingenuity made necessary in Visconti's **Senso** (1953) where a scene in an opera house consisted of a painted crowd overlaid by bits of fluttering material to give the illusion of live-action.

Also, when director Michael Winner needed 'extras' to fill the grandstands in his Olympic Games movie, **The Games** (1969), he was forced to use cardboard cut-outs. And when Alfred Hitchcock wanted to show the stars of **Topaz** (1969) attending a Castro rally in Cuba, he had to resort to intercutting 16mm newsreel footage with studio close-ups. These days sophisticated digital-mattes could have done the job for him.

Still, there lurks a danger. Professor Mark Crispin Miller (author of a classic essay on Hitchcock's **Suspicion**) stands out as someone who has begun to worry that a quest for pure sensation is replacing the requirement to tell a good story. 'They're moving away from storytelling toward a kind of theme-park experience', he said recently.

'New' Hitchcocks

A new score for the silent version of Hitchcock's **Blackmail** (1929) premiered in both Paris and London earlier this year. Composer of the new score, Jonathan Lloyd, commented: 'Not the least of the charms of **Blackmail** is that it has no ending - nothing is resolved. Alice White's future exists in one's imagination, as does the music which accompanies it.'

'MacGuffin' readers in Australia can look forward to seeing - and hearing - **Blackmail** in a new 35mm print early in 1994, as part of a Hitchcock season to be mounted by the Australian Film Institute in conjunction with the British Film Institute. Hitchcock's English films of the 1930s will make up the bulk of the season, together with the first Australian screenings of the two short films he made in England in 1944 in support of the Free French movement: **Bon Voyage** and **Aventure Malgache**.

Another 'first' for Australian filmgoers will be the opportunity to see a screening of the 3-D print of Hitchcock's **Dial M for Murder** (1954). In Melbourne, a season of the film starts on December 31, at the Valhalla Cinema.

Publications

The 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' is out, and contains articles on **Rear Window**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, and **Vertigo**, as well as book reviews. Also, a highlight of this issue is a shot-by-shot transcription of **Easy Virtue**, the first in a series of such transcriptions. Cost in US dollars is $7 for individuals ($12 for two years), $10 for institutions ($17 for two years). Send to: 'Hitchcock Annual'. P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA.

The list of new or recent books on Hitchcock is headed by the superb 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (Scarecrow Press) by Theodore Price, which will be reviewed at length in the next 'MacGuffin'. Another hardback book now available is 'Alfred Hitchcock: A Guide to References and Resources' (G.K. Hall & Co.) by Jane E. Sloan. Its 600 pages include entries on every Hitchcock film, together with an annotated bibliography of writings by and about Hitchcock - the latter section alone runs to nearly 200 pages.

The British Film Institute continues to publish monographs in the BFI Classics series. 'Blackmail' by Tom Ryall is reviewed in this 'MacGuffin'. The publication of 'Vertigo' has been delayed: in a letter, Tim Hunter tells us that he's had to relinquish authorship because of family and business pressures. (Which is a pity as Tim mentions that he's seen **Vertigo** 'around 50 times and many of Hitchcock's films almost that many'.) Another monograph in the series is 'L'Atalante' by novelist Marina Warner, whose study of Jean Vigo's 1934 masterpiece is said to be 'brilliant ... a major contribution to the literature of film'.

Scott Murray, editor of 'Cinema Papers', has edited two new books on the Australian film industry. One is called 'Australian Cinema', and consists of programme notes for an Australian film retrospective shown in Paris in 1992. The other is 'Australian Film, 1978-1992: A Survey of Theatrical Features', whose contributors include Dr Brian McFarlane and Adrian Martin.

And the Australian Film Institute has launched a regular series of 'Moving Image' publications, starting with 'Sites of Difference: Cinematic Representation of Aboriginality and Gender' by Karen Jennings. Most of these books are available from the Electric Shadows Bookshop, Canberra City, ACT 2601. Ph. 06-248 8352. Fax 06-247 8924.

No duel in this jewel

The ending Hitchcock wanted for **Topaz** (1969) was a pistol-duel at dawn between hero and villain in a Paris soccer stadium. He conducted extensive research and established that clandestine duels still took place; moreover, he went to great trouble to find the exact protocol used (no mere 'take ten paces, turn, and fire') before he eventually shot and re-shot parts of the scene up to three times. Its ironic point consisted of the fact that an unknown third party, no doubt politically motivated, suddenly pre-empts matters by shooting one of the duellists from the grandstand. There were clear thematic parallels with some of Hitchcock's earlier work, notably the portrayal of the CIA in **North by Northwest** (1959). Yet when the film came out, the duel-scene was missing.

Australian director Richard Franklin (**Psycho II**, **Road Games**) knows why. As he recently wrote in an article for 'Cinema Papers' (October 1993), a single preview in San Francisco went badly and the producers forced Hitchcock to remove the scene. Years afterwards, Franklin helped locate the missing footage - officially destroyed - in Hitchcock's garage. It has now been included on the laser-disk of the film.

Making 'AI'

Stanley Kubrick seems to have changed his mind about his next project. He is now working on a science-fiction movie about robots in New Jersey.

It concerns artificial intelligence, and will therefore be called **AI**. The setting is a future where intelligent robots have a range of capacities, and the greenhouse effect has melted the ice caps leaving many major cities under water.

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BOOKS REVIEW

Ryall, Tom: 'Blackmail' (British Film Institute, London, 1993; pb, 64 pp.);
Sterritt, David: 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh, 1993; pb, 165 pp.).

If both these books are somewhat disappointing, there's this compensation: at times, each serves as a corrective to the other. For instance, when David Sterritt makes one of his typically ambitious claims, to the effect that Tracy, the eponymous blackmailer of Hitchcock's 1929 film, personifies 'the lurking chaos of the city and of spontaneous adult life in general' (p. 35), the more earthbound Tom Ryall can quote you documentarist John Grierson (writing in the '30s) on how Hitchcock is 'the only English director who can put the English poor on the screen with any verisimilitude' (p. 40).

Blackmail was made for British International Pictures in both a sound- and a silent-version. In its sound-version, it received its first UK trade-show screening on 21 June, 1929. Mark that date. Hitchcock's film is often said to be the first British talkie, yet Ryall twice refers (pp. 9, 17) to a sound-feature, **The Clue of the New Pin**, made for British Lion and released in March, 1929. Moreover, the latter film's distributor claimed that **it** was the first British 'All-Talkie' (p. 17). Ryall, though, simply leaves the matter hanging.

That's bad enough, but Ryall doesn't seem to have even tried to find out about the other film. For the record, I can tell him that it was based on an Edgar Wallace novel and featured Donald Calthrop, the very actor who plays Tracy in **Blackmail**. It also had a 25-year-old John Gielgud in a bit-part.

Nor does Ryall clear up a related matter for me. Another film from British Lion, and again one based on Edgar Wallace, was made at about the same time as **Clue**. This was **The Flying Squad** (with a young Carol Reed in a bit-part). In view of Hitchcock's emphasis in the first reel of **Blackmail** on the work of the flying squad (London's motorised police), as well as a dialogue-reference to Edgar Wallace, was he even then showing his masterful bent and trying to out-shine the rival studio in more ways than simply being first with an all-talking picture?

Again, Ryall notes that Hitchcock's film was based on a stage play by Charles Bennett which had opened in the West End in 1928 (p. 21). Entries in the Bibliography show that a novelisation of the play was published in 1929, and that the play itself ('in Three Acts') was published in 1934. Yet Ryall makes no attempt to compare play (or novelisation) and film in order to demonstrate what use Hitchcock made of his source.

Frankly, this little book is unimaginative in many ways. To the rich and intriguing text - and texture - of the film (which 'The MacGuffin' hopes to feature one day soon), it is generally unresponsive. Typical here is its failure to say anything new about the portrait of an accusing jester, which keeps returning. By the end of the film, that ambiguous image has become virtually the forerunner of the nun in the bell-tower at the end of **Vertigo** (1958): a sardonic commentary on the film's events, employing an official 'outsider' (jester in uniform, nun in black garb), yet also a virtual instigator of those events, being itself an image of the mortal (and less than pretty) human condition. One of the few 'pluses' about this book is its

inclusion of several large and sharp frame-stills, and one of those (p. 45) is of the portrait. Studying it, you notice that the figure in jester's costume is that of an aging man whose derisive mouth has most of its teeth missing ...

Such an 'expressionist' figure would seem to be in keeping with David Sterritt's broad view of Tracy the blackmailer as epitomising 'the lurking chaos of the city'. Certainly he is 'lurking'. I think it is Sterritt's other view of him, as representing 'spontaneous adult life in general' that I find inaccurate. Not only is Tracy **not** spontaneous (what blackmailer is?), but he is too much a figure of the working-class, or lower middle-class, to stand for 'adult life in general'. Presumably Sterritt was thinking of the scene where Tracy visits Alice (Anny Ondra) and her detective boyfriend (John Longden), and puts on a show of power (with a symbolic cigar) in order to drive home his extortion. But that 'show' is only improvised within strict limits, and seems not to be particularly representative. Unfortunately, I find much else in Sterritt's book that is likewise not thought through by him.

On the other hand, his description of the British Museum climax of **Blackmail** is superior to Ryall's. I particularly liked a passage (p. 46) which concludes:

> Hitchcock films the museum as if it were a surrogate church, with a sense of awe and timelessness; the fountain scene suggests holy water and Tracy's desperate need for salvation. It is very like Hitchcock to find a sense of larger-than-life, almost superhuman power in an architecturally impressive setting that is nonetheless wholly secular in nature.

Sterritt's book deals with six Hitchcock films: **Blackmail**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, **The Wrong Man**, **Vertigo**, **Psycho**, and **The Birds**. His chapter on **Psycho** (1960) is probably the best, and it concentrates on the film's running-gag concerning money and 'anal-compulsive' behaviour. In particular, Sterritt notes the characters' attachment to what they've 'made', beginning with Cassidy's pleasure in 'dumping out' $40,000 for the women in Lowery's office to admire, and how even after the car with the wad of money in its boot has bottomed in a faecal swamp, Norman retains his own 'illicit bundle' - his mother's corpse. 'The movie's symbolic order', we're told, 'remains entirely intact, its first energizing object impressively exchanged for one far larger, smellier, and more forbidden.' (p. 110)

My sole criticism of this is that it doesn't see the pertinence of Hitchcock's joke. Sterritt should have read Norman O. Brown's 'Life Against Death' (1959) - incidentally, very Hitchcockian names in themselves - and especially Chapter XV called 'Filthy Lucre', which spells out beautifully our society's unconscious equation of faeces with child, gift, property, and even weapon; and why any 'puritanical' desire to transcend the body (such as I think Marion Crane shows in Hitchcock's film) ironically posits that body's continued status as excrement.

K.M.

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Keynotes: Jane Campion's 'The Piano'

Jane Campion, writer and director of **The Piano**, was born and raised in New Zealand but, after completing courses in anthropology and art, studied film direction at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney, where she has lived ever since. Local film critics, as well as judges of international film festivals, quickly recognised the arrival of a distinctive new talent in her early short films, **Peel** (1982) and **A Girl's Own Story** (1983), which were acclaimed for their quirky wit and their strikingly surreal visual style, as was her first feature, **Sweetie** (1989). Feminist critics celebrated her contribution to the volume and variety of independent women's filmmaking in Australia; they also welcomed her acute analysis of the destructive dynamics of the nuclear family and what it means to grow up female within it.

The Piano is a more palatable and polished film than **Sweetie**, which was rough and grating and unnerving. Its wide panoramic landscapes, romantic musical score, lavish period costumes and star performances locate it in the genre of glossy romantic melodramas with exotic period settings, alongside films like **Ryan's Daughter** and **Out of Africa**. The story is a familiar one: prim, proud Victorian lady defies convention, and

deserts her legal husband when she experiences sexual passion in the arms of a man who has 'gone native'. In synopsis, it sounds like a Lawrentian hymn to sexual liberation. If this were the case, it would not have such a strong appeal to contemporary women, nor frustrate male viewers, as critical and audience reactions have indicated. This is definitely a woman's film, one that celebrates feminine culture, life without men, as much as sexual passion shared between a man and a woman. If you are in any doubt about this point, you need only look at the film's troubling epilogue, where the union of the romantic couple is shown to be accompanied by a deep sense of loss, on the part of the woman, as well as impairment of her creative faculties.

Swept up in sexual passion, she has abandoned her mute isolation, her dyadic relationship with her daughter, and her symbiotic relationship with her piano. But is it a victory, or a tragedy? She can now enter the social realm of language, but she utters only croaky sounds. No longer can she create beautiful music, nor conjure up fairytales with her fingertips.

Hands and fingers are central motifs of this film, which gives as much emphasis to the sense of touch as it does to sight and hearing. Ada caresses the keys of the piano with her fingers; she and her daughter speak to each other with their fingers; she is aroused by the touch of the man's hand; she reprimands him with a slap of her hand; she comforts her husband with gentle hands. Traditionally, women's work and women's culture (needlework, kitchenwork, childcare, letter-writing, playing musical instruments) have been associated with the skill of their hands and the dexterity of their fingers. It is also common belief that women are sexually aroused by touch, in contrast to men, who (like Stewart in the film) are turned on by voyeurism.

The key visual symbols of the film are the piano and the axe. The piano is the mute Ada's chief means of expression, expressing her longings, her unease and her fears. It is her voice, her therapy, her addiction, her self. The axe hovers over the film: it cuts down the forest, fences the land stolen from the Maoris, features in the Bluebeard shadow-play in the church hall, and is ultimately wielded on the woman's body, when the husband's patience is exhausted. It is the masculine weapon, as against the feminine instrument. The key of the piano is a love letter, which is answered by a blow from the axe. But, feminine mettle finally melts masculine metal.

The visual style of the film is more classical, closer to **An Angel at My Table** (1990) than **Sweetie**, but there are surrealist touches and striking stylistic flourishes that recall Campion's early works, as well as the work of other film artists. Like Polanski's wardrobe (in his short, **Two Men and a Wardrobe**), the piano emerges from the sea and returns to the sea, surreally if not absurdly. The graphic matches of mother and daughter in identical bonnets and frocks have the fearful symmetry of an Ozu frame. The track-ins to Ada's hoop and bun have an hallucinatory effect not unlike that produced by Saul Bass's credits for **Vertigo** and **The Age of Innocence**; like Bass's eyes and flowers, the object is both pure pattern, the perfect spiral, and a vortex of emotions - charged with eroticism and danger.

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BLOOPERS

First, apologies to Adrian Martin. A misplaced quotation-mark near the foot of p. 17 last issue made it seem that Raymond Durgnat had described **Vertigo** as a 'melodrama of an unknown woman woven into a mystery plot', when it was Adrian! The second quotation-mark should have followed 'woman'. (The correctly-quoted phrase, 'melodrama of an unknown woman', itself comes from Stanley Cavell, of course.)

Even the 'Bloopers' section last time (pp. 13-14) had its own gremlins. It seems that Slavoj Zizek's 'Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out' (Routledge, 1992) really is distinct from his 'Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture' (MIT Press, 1992). Our information-source this time is the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', p. 145.

And of course Raffles in the popular stories by E.W. Hornung (1866-1921) is a gentleman-thief, certainly not a detective as we indicated.

Likewise, the Editorial last time was wrong to say that John Buchan wrote travel books as well as novels. The phrase 'travel books' should read 'historical biographies' (of which the best-known is probably the one on Oliver Cromwell).

When is a kiss really a necking-scene? Depending on your definition, it seems that we may have been wrong in claiming (p. 3) that Hitchcock's **Notorious** holds the record for the longest screen-kiss. Leonard Maltin ('Movie and Video Guide 1993') prefers to award that accolade to Lewis Seiler's **You're in the Army Now** (1941) for its 3 minute, 5 second kiss between Regis Toomey and Jane Wyman.

Finally, back in 'MacGuffin' 5, on p. 17, we called actor Edmund Gwenn a Cockney. David Thomson's 'A Biographical Dictionary of Film' says that Gwenn was born in Glamorgan, Wales, but this is contradicted by the biographical note on the actor in 'The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers'. There, it says he was born in London, England, on 26 September 1875, and notes that he was the brother of the actor Arthur Chesney. (Yet the actual text of the entry still calls Gwenn 'Welsh-born'!)

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The Fragments of the Mirror: 'Vertigo' (1958) and its Sources

(a) Prologue

In Hitchcock's **To Catch a Thief** (1955), ex-cat-burglar John Robie (Cary Grant) has returned to his hotel room from a tryst with Francie Stevens (Grace Kelly) in which the two of them had dined in her mother's suite and watched, through the window, a display of fireworks above the bay. Suddenly Francie invades John's room with an anguished demand that he 'give them back - Mother's jewels!' This incident isn't to be found in David Dodge's novel (1953) on which the film is based. Rather, it may recall a much earlier, and famous, episode in literature: the central incident of William Wilkie Collins's great mystery-story about a jewel, 'The Moonstone' (1868). Of the latter, scholar Anthea Trodd writes: 'the novel owes its career in the psychoanalytic journals to the fact that its central episode takes place at midnight in the heroine's bedroom when her tacit acquiescence in the theft of her valuable becomes hysterical reaction by morning'.[1]

As we'll see, there are other cases of Collins's (direct or indirect) influence on Hitchcock. But here's a rather different kind of 'borrowing' by the director. Stephen Rebello has shown that when Hitchcock was planning **Psycho** (1960) he looked again at Henri-Georges Clouzot's **Les Diaboliques/The Fiends** (1954), which was based on the novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Hitchcock particularly noted aspects of the French film's publicity campaign, as well as its use of 'moody, dirty-dishes-in-the-sink black and white'.[2] In addition, he probably enjoyed seeing again on screen the actor Charles Vanel who in **Les Diaboliques** plays the snooping Inspector Fichet and in **To Catch a Thief** the edgy restaurateur Bertani. We'll see that Vanel (1892-1979) seems to have been something of a specialist at appearing in plots based on a 'big lie'. **Les Diaboliques** is certainly that, as it involves characters conspiring to stage an elaborate hoax version of the truth in order to try and frighten their victim to death.

Such plots found their way into some Hollywood movies, and Humphrey Bogart appeared in at least two of them. In Curtis Bernhardt's **Conflict** (1945) he plays a wife-murderer whom psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet tries to scare into a confession by making it seem that the wife is still alive. At one point, Bogart visits a pawnshop and sees what looks like his wife's recent handwriting in the ledger. He leaves to fetch a police detective. When the two men return, a different pawnbroker awaits them. This man denies all knowledge of a colleague or an assistant. Moreover, the line in the ledger now bears someone else's signature. Here of course there are echoes of Hitchcock's **The Lady Vanishes** (1938) yet also an anticipation of - perhaps a direct influence on - the scene in **North by Northwest** (1959) in which Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) returns with the police to his abductor's house where all evidence of what happened the night before has been erased or altered. We'll see that **Conflict** certainly influenced a key moment in **Vertigo**.

But another influence on the scene in **North by Northwest** (and the one in **Conflict**) is possible, and indeed likely. Vincent Sherman's **All Through the Night** (1942) depicts Bogart as a good-at-heart racketeer who helps to smash a gang of Nazi fifth-columnists who use a New York antique-auction business as their cover. After Bogart is kidnapped by the gang, he manages to escape and return with the police - only to find a

surly, know-nothing attendant minding the tidied-up premises. The attendant denies everything, naturally. Now, the influence of **All Through the Night** on **North by Northwest** is made especially likely by the fact that another of the scenes in Sherman's film looks like the forerunner of Hitchcock's famous auction-gallery episode. Needing an excuse to enter the gang's storeroom next to the auction room, Bogart hits on the ruse of making an unusually high (and therefore unbeatable) bid for an old desk - to the consternation of the auctioneer (Conrad Veidt) and his sinister offsiders (Judith Anderson, Peter Lorre) who see what he is up to.

Of course, Thornhill in **North by Northwest** makes crazier bids, for in his case his intention is to force the gallery staff to call the police. Another 1942 film may have inspired this aspect of Hitchcock's auction-gallery scene. Sidney Lanfield's **My Favourite Blonde** is actually something of a spoof of Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps** (1935), and it casts Madeleine Carroll alongside Bob Hope to help make its point. In an amusing escapade, Hope and Carroll find themselves holed-up in a hotel room by foreign agents who have staked out the building. Desperate, the pair pretend to be a feuding husband and wife (as in Hitchcock's recently-released **Mr and Mrs Smith**) and start to wreck everything in sight. Soon the hotel management arrives with the law ...

So it looks as though Hitchcock, somewhere along the line, saw how he might amalgamate these two scenes from different films in order to get a maximum comic effect. That he kept a file of just such ideas was revealed in a press-release for **Torn Curtain** in 1966. Most of Hitchcock's films, said the release, 'begin in pigeonholes where he stores sudden thoughts and ideas'. The release quoted Hitchcock as saying that his file contained 'several score' ideas for films. But Hitchcock then added: 'The volume is the least important aspect of all. Only quality counts in that file.'

I've cited Curtis Bernhardt as a director who may have influenced Hitchcock, i.e. whose film **Conflict** contains at least one scene which arguably turns up later in Hitch's work. Bernhardt (1899-1981) was a German who came to Hollywood after working in Great Britain and France; what's also to our purpose is that **Conflict** was based on a story by two authors at least one of whom had his own roots in Germany - the American-born Robert Siodmak (1900-1973). Siodmak's career has definite involvement with Hitchcock's: for a time in the 1940s both men even shared the same producer, Joan Harrison. Moreover, like Bernhardt, Siodmak had worked in both Germany and France, before he returned to America in 1937. Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jordan** (1949) stars Barbara Stanwyck and Wendell Corey. Not only does its noirish plot combine elements of Billy Wilder's **Double Indemnity** (1944) with aspects of Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case** (1947), but it contains a key moment in which the two principals, hitherto separated in the frame, back together behind a barred gate - thereby providing an image of complicity which Hitchcock almost certainly noted and then used with telling effect in **Strangers on a Train** (1951).[3]

And there's one more German expatriate who belongs in this article. I'm thinking of William Dieterle (1893-1972) whose career, initially as an actor, had already begun when Hitchcock worked for a year in Germany in 1925. Coming to Hollywood at the start of the sound era, Dieterle soon confirmed his already high reputation as a director. By the time he made **The Life of Emile Zola** (1937), he had shown himself to be 'at his best, an incomparable master of crowd scenes and pictorial composition'.[4] In that film, an 'umbrella' motif is artfully used. It culminates in the spectacle of a vast sea of umbrellas belonging to an angry mob waiting in the rain outside the Palais de Justice where Zola (Paul Muni) is on trial. Most of the shouts heard are against Zola and for the Army; when a pro-Zola voice is raised, its owner is promptly set upon by the other 'umbrellas' nearby.[5] This intriguing scene would be echoed three years later by the episode in Hitchcock's **Foreign Correspondent** involving the assassination of a diplomat on the rain-swept steps of the Amsterdam town hall and the gunman's escape across a square full of bobbing brollies.

(b) What Freud can tell us about 'Vertigo'

Without question, much of what Freud wrote is illuminating of Hitchcock's films. For instance, there's Freud's ambivalent attitude towards the Nirvana principle and its relation to the broader death instinct - in effect, towards pleasure versus annihilation. See, in particular, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924). That essay may be the best place to start if you want to grasp why in **Vertigo** even nuns are figures of both life and death.

But I want to concentrate here mainly on how psychoanalysis may explain the actual narrative, or plot, of **Vertigo**, and therefore I'll focus on just two of Freud's works.

(i) Art lecturer Victor Burgin[6] sees similarities between the kind of male desire described in Freud's essay 'A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men' (1910) and the pattern of behaviour shown by 'Scottie' (James Stewart) in Hitchcock's film. The particular love-object desired by the man in Freud's syndrome is invariably a woman already attached to some other man - husband, fiancé, or friend: in Scottie's case, he falls in love with 'Madeleine' (Kim Novak), the wife of his old college chum, Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore). Next, the woman in Freud's syndrome is understood by the man to be of bad repute sexually: Madeleine seems fixated on her forebear, Carlotta, whose illicit love affair and illegitimate child brought her to a tragic end. Further, the type of man described by Freud is invariably moved to 'rescue' the woman, and prominent among such rescue fantasies is rescue from water: Scottie rescues Madeleine from San Francisco Bay. Lastly, Freud notes how the life of such a man may show a repetition of these attachments, each woman being 'an exact replica of the other': so, just as Madeleine models herself on Carlotta's portrait, Judy (Kim Novak), with whom Scottie next falls in love, appears to be a literal reincarnation of Madeleine whom he sets about 'remaking' into a replica of her predecessors.

Behind this pattern of repetition Freud discerns (in Burgin's words) 'a primary scenario of male Oedipal desire for the mother ... already attached to the father, her sexual relations with whom bring her into ill repute in the eyes of the little rival for her love'. Applied to **Vertigo**, this interpretation supports Robin Wood's description of the film as a search for 'the lost breast': see his 1983 article 'Fear of Spying'.[7] There, Wood even seeks to explain why the film's avowed 'motherly' character called 'Midge' (Barbara Bel Geddes) **can't** represent Scottie's ideal. But clearly there's now an extra reason, i.e. Midge's **lack** of attachment to another man, of any suggestion of ill repute, of any need for being rescued ...

Freud has more to say on that last matter. The man's fantasy of rescue from water conflates 'rescue' with 'birth'. Just as he was, at birth, 'fished from the waters' and given life, so would he now return that gift to his 'mother'. Tragically, though, the adult man's succession of attachments to mother-figures is bound to be endless because such surrogates can never match the unique original. (Here you may think of Hitchcock's 1926 film, **The Lodger**, where the Ivor Novello character is attracted to a succession of look-alikes of his dead sister - whose murder at her coming-out ball significantly had coincided with the incipient death of the mother. See 'MacGuffin' 3.)

(ii) Of even greater pertinence to **Vertigo** (and Hitchcock criticism, as Peter Wollen once suggested)[8] is another of Freud's essays, the brilliant 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's **Gradiva**' (1907). In it, Freud analyses the 1903 novella by North German playwright and novelist Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911), a work described by Jensen himself as a 'Pompeian phantasy'. Here's a synopsis of the novella taken from an article written for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' by Donald O. Chankin:[9]

> [It] deals with the fantasies created by a young archaeologist, Norbert Hanold, around an ancient bas relief of a young woman with an exotic gait. Hanold names the sculpture, of which he (like Freud) owns a model, the 'Gradiva, the girl splendid in walking.' Hanold elaborates the fantasy, which finds its way into a dream, that the original model for the Gradiva dies in Pompeii when Vesuvius erupts in 79 A.D. He travels to Pompeii where, to escape from the honeymoon couples expressing their love among the ruins, he visits the excavations in the midday heat only to see the Gradiva walking in her unique way. Hanold addresses her in Greek and Latin but fails to get a response until he tries German. He persists in the idea that she is the ghost of a woman who died eighteen hundred years previously even after conversing with her. The flesh and blood woman, Zoë, realizing well before he does that they were in fact childhood sweethearts, plays along with Hanold's fantasies as a means both of curing him of his delusion and of gaining - or regaining - his love. She earns her name (Zoë means life in Greek) by gently leading him to understand his 'psychic condition which is called a dream that transported [her] into the time of the destruction of Pompeii.' After succeeding in lifting his repression of their earlier love she ruefully comments: 'To think that a person must first die to become alive; but for the archaeologist that is necessary, I suppose.'

Commenting, Professor Chankin says that Jensen furnishes 'some of Freud's favourite motifs' - e.g. 'psychotherapy as the process of lifting repression' - and notes that in **Vertigo** Scottie 'destroys his re-creation rather than acknowledging her as does Hanold'. Chankin doesn't suggest reasons for Scottie's perversity. But of course we've already noted one such reason - that Scottie is pursuing an unrealisable mother-ideal - and we'll encounter a more philosophical explanation shortly. Meanwhile, let's see what else Freud has to say about a male fantasy of finding and rescuing the beloved object.

Actually, it's important to note that Hanold in 'Gradiva' for a time prefers his fantasy to the reality. The real Gradiva/Zoe is a neighbour whose existence he has long ago 'forgotten'. As Freud shows, Hanold actually goes to Italy in order to escape that reality. Moreover, after he discovers the bas-relief in a museum in Rome, he's happy to elaborate his fantasy so long as it seems to fit his professional interest as an archaeologist - but he's more than a little disconcerted when the real Gradiva/Zoe materialises. And not just because a dream isn't supposed to turn real. There's an Oedipal conflict going on in Hanold, although ironically Freud never refers to it as such. The real Gradiva/Zoe lives with her father, an eminent Professor of Zoology, over the way from Hanold in a university town in Germany. Hanold seems to have been cowered by the proximity of such an eminent man and his daughter. As children, he and Zoe had played together, but the time soon came when he had felt the need to put aside childish things, and he had abandoned his playmate. At the same time, Zoe's work-preoccupied father had tended to ignore her as well - a man's prerogative, no doubt.

Much of this reminded me of **Notorious** (1946) as well as **Vertigo**. (But in terms of fantasies about rescuing the woman, the earlier film differs significantly from the later one: during much of **Notorious**, the Cary Grant character must look on while his rival, Claude Rains, does the rescuing; whereas in **Vertigo** Scottie is allowed to rescue Madeleine quite early - before watching helplessly when he loses her again.) I shan't pursue the parallels, though, and I'll merely note how in both 'Gradiva' and in the Hitchcock films a trip to an exotic locale, or a re-discovery of it (as with Scottie and Madeleine), seems needed to set the revivification process going. Freud comments that Pompeii provides an apt symbol for both repression and for the excavation of buried memories. Similarly, San Francisco with its colourful history part-destroyed by earthquake and fire and by the fog of memory provides the perfect locale for **Vertigo**. Note that when Scottie and Madeleine/Judy visit San Juan Bautista and Muir Woods, these places are in a sense just extensions of the 'mystery' associated with the city.

Freud's essay on 'Gradiva' throws light into many of **Vertigo**'s corners - and not just its literal ones. For instance, concerning an Oedipal syndrome, we may sense how Gavin Elster's relation to Madeleine/Judy appears to Scottie to be that of a (fairly amenable) father/guardian as well as that of a husband/lover. Further to the point, these relations are conflatable in Scottie's eyes, offering like instances of the man asserting ownership of the woman - with the inference for Scottie that he, too, should 'possess' a woman if he is to be anything more than a 'big boy' (as Midge calls him).

Next, notice from the synopsis of the novella how Gradiva/Zoe is first associated in Hanold's fantasies with classical objects (e.g. the bas-relief itself) and a likely knowledge of Greek and Latin. In the first of two dreams, Hanold sees her in the portico of the temple of Apollo; later, in the real Pompeii, strolling 'aimlessly through the town' at 'the hour of ghosts', he sees her crossing the street with her distinctive gait, stepping from one stone to another - but then she seems to disappear, until, after some anxious searching, he finds her again, 'between two yellow columns'. Clearly, much of this anticipates Scottie's idealisation of Madeleine in the first half of **Vertigo**. (You may even be reminded of Madeleine's saying that she had once fallen into a river, 'trying to leap from one stone to the next'.) Freud explains the situation as signalling how Hanold has repressed his sexual feelings. Zoe/Gradiva is kept at a distance, put on a pedestal. But now a turning-point is reached. Hanold rests his hand on the woman's, ostensibly to test her corporeal reality yet clearly with an underlying erotic motive. You think of how in **Vertigo**, sitting before the fire in his apartment, Scottie puts his hand on Madeleine's, seemingly by accident as he reaches for her coffee-cup ...

Importantly, Freud speaks of how Gradiva/Zoe shows a 'peculiar oscillation between death and life'. I think something similar occurs in **Vertigo**, where **everything** reflects such a dualism. For instance, is Muir Woods with its Sequoias ('always green, ever-living') a place of life or is it (being dark and overwhelming) a place of death? Is even the busy city of San Francisco truly living, or is it just a place

of death-in-life? (Its people seem to move as if underwater.) In characterising Gradiva/Zoe as oscillating between death and life, Freud implies that this is how Hanold, who himself oscillates between repression and its opposite, sees her. In turn, such a situation raises a host of further questions.

Now, as I understand it, even if we could all be as unrepressed as Nietzsche's Superman (and Nietzsche was a major influence on Freud), we would remain bound in subjectivity, a condition which Nietzsche's predecessor Schopenhauer called the **principium individuationis**. Moreover, given that the forever 'joyful' Superman 'does not want heirs, or children' but 'wants everything eternally the same',[10] even he would seem to be, in a sense, both anti-life and anti-art. Discussing this matter in 'MacGuffin' 7, I said that 'Schopenhauer, Freud and Hitchcock, pessimists all, are united in doubting the **feasibility** of the Superman solution'. I think that's a fairly accurate statement.

So why, exactly, do both 'Gradiva' and **Vertigo** show ambivalence? Why, for example, does the author of 'Gradiva' give Zoe her classical (Greek) name which means 'life'? Isn't that a contradiction? Here, for all the brilliance of Freud's essay, he isn't particularly helpful. Frankly, the essay is too simply 'Freudian'. In stressing the 'therapeutic' and 'dream-analysis' aspects of Hanold's case, Freud on this occasion[11] forgets the lesson of Schopenhauer that life itself is a mixed blessing (although it's all we've got) and that the life-force ('Will') is 'blind', being destructive or harshly indifferent as well as vitalising and procreative. (As we're about to see, Edgar Allan Poe expressed 'a wish to get out of the world'. Was this **just** a neurotic impulse?) Moreover, when faced with a remark like Zoe's to Hanold near the end of the novella, 'I feel as though we had shared a meal like this before, two thousand years ago', Freud explains it as merely Zoe's convenient way of urging Hanold to remember his childhood. Any more 'archetypal' resonance is allowed to go unremarked.

Yet if I had to say briefly why Hitchcock's **Vertigo** is a better work than his earlier **Spellbound** (1945), I think my point would be that **Vertigo** does **not** limit itself to the merely Freudian, and **does** take account of more suggestive patterns and resonances.

(c) Some literary sources for 'Vertigo'

Here I want to treat, quite briefly, works by five authors of differing nationalities and reputations. Those authors are: Edgar Allan Poe, Alexandre Dumas **fils**, William Wilkie Collins, Thomas Mann, and Robert Nathan.

(i) Of all authors, Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) fascinated the young Hitchcock 'most of all', as Donald Spoto says.[12] Hitchcock later wrote that he had felt 'an enormous pity' for Poe's life which 'had never been happy'. Further, Hitchcock suggested that it was because he had been so taken with Poe's stories that he afterwards felt the challenge of making suspense pictures. Now, literary scholar Karl Miller ('Doubles')[13] has some illuminating things to say on Poe which, I suggest, are relevant to Hitchcock's films, especially **Vertigo**. For instance, Miller notes that several of Poe's stories express 'a wish to get out of the world', citing as examples 'William Wilson' and 'The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall'. It's an observation which applies equally to Scottie, a part of whom clearly wishes to be, in a sense, upwardly mobile. If he could, he would even escape the spiral of history itself. (In this connection, I also think of how Schopenhauer praised Immanuel Kant for showing that we can't get out of the world 'by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement it is perhaps not impossible to do so'.[14] I'll come back to this.)

However, Miller adds that there was a more cautious, stay-at-home side to Poe:

> But romance is variance, as well as velocity and vertigo, and the soaring self vies with a self that stays, knowing that flights may fail.

What Poe wanted, says Miller, was to escape life's 'enigmas' but not to go too far away, 'to depart, yet live' (the quoted words are Hans Pfaall's). Accordingly, Poe once told a woman friend that he'd like to live in a cottage 'not **too** far secluded from the world'. In turn, Poe's own journeys are said to

> embody the search for a mother, and an effort to regain the mother he had lost, and his 'depart, yet live' may be matched with the tension in his writings between an impulse to guard against the horrors of premature burial and an impulse to be interred with the maternal remains. No one has given such point to the traditional joke about the romantic rhyme of 'womb' and 'tomb'.

The single tale of Poe's most relevant to **Vertigo** is of course 'Ligeia' - where, though, contra Hitchcock's film, the lost love, Ligeia, is the dark-haired one, and the woman who comes to embody her is a blonde, Lady Rowena. Nevertheless, it's clear that Ligeia is one of Poe's 'tyrant mothers', as Camille Paglia calls her: 'The [male] narrator of **Ligeia** is a "child" beneath the tutelage and "infinite supremacy" of the heroine'.[15] The narrator describes her as having 'the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth', and as a woman of 'immense' learning. Here you may think of how Scottie's worshipful pursuit of Madeleine in **Vertigo** accrues ever-richer associations of religion, art, and Romantic (almost Platonic) ideals. As for Madeleine's blonde, i.e. non-dark, hair, it's one more of the ambiguous or conflicting details which the Catholic Hitchcock brought to the character: as noted in 'MacGuffin' 3, Madeleine's very name can connote both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene.

Some of the above is noted in Professor Chankin's article on **Vertigo**, which I've mentioned already in connection with Freud's essay on 'Gradiva'. But once again the professor seems to me to make too little of issues brought into focus by the parallel(ed) texts. For instance, here's Chankin: 'Ligeia's notion that man yields to death only through an infirmity of the will, however appealing, is still the scaffolding for a ghost story.' Indeed it is. But the 'notion' mentioned here is actually that of the English theologian Joseph Glanvill (1636-80), author of 'Lux Orientalis' ('The Light of the East'), who, a century and a half before Schopenhauer, wrote the following passage quoted three times in Poe's tale:

> And the will ... dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doeth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.

Ligeia dies with that last sentence on her lips. But now notice (which Chankin doesn't mention) that the sentence before it says that God and 'will' are one and the same. (Schopenhauer wouldn't use the word 'God', yet Will is certainly the key to his universe.) In turn, notice how the following crucial passage from Poe's tale gives us the narrator's train of association even as it eerily anticipates Scottie's view of Madeleine:

> An **intensity** in thought, action, or speech was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes ...

The links to **Vertigo** are several: for example, you think immediately of the film's credits-sequence and the woman's darting eyes. Most crucially, though, what connects the heroines of the two works is how they are seen by the respective men (Poe's narrator, Scottie) to embody the long-sought key to escaping, or explaining, life's cruel enigmas - though still themselves subject to that cruelty. Mother-figures they may be, but also, by that very fact, possessed by a harsh male God, or force. Some commentators see the end of Poe's tale as signifying the woman's actually being, or becoming, God: Ligeia reappears in the flesh and lineaments of the second wife's corpse. But is the intensity of 'will' manifested here really that of Ligeia herself? Or of the narrator? Or of some other agency? As for the ending of Hitchcock's film, I find it even more compatible, if anything, with the understanding shared by Glanvill and by Schopenhauer, that 'God' or 'Will' is impersonal, and ultimately not a matter of deliberate human volition at all. What Glanvill's Orient, and Schopenhauer, call Nirvana represents a **yielding**, even unto death, of the individual will to the world's Will; and it's apt that Scottie's inability to abandon his self-interest finally leaves him more desolate than ever. (I'm speaking in terms of allegory here, obviously. Madeleine/Judy's death conforms to that allegory, but is otherwise very sad.) Thus Scottie's ascent of the mission bell-tower merely **parodies** the 'perpendicular movement', i.e. transcendence, of which Schopenhauer spoke, as it parodies Nietzsche's notion of the un-cautious Superman. We'll shortly see a quite similar theme operating in Thomas Mann's novella 'Death in Venice'.

(ii) First, though, a word about Hitchcock's 'quoting' of the novel and play 'La Dame aux Camelias' by Alexandre Dumas **fils** (1824-95). That work, of course, contains another of fiction's 'archetypal' fascinating women (like Ligeia), justifying academic David Coward's recent claim that courtesan Marguerite Gautier exists 'at the centre of the collective unconscious' - even though, by the same token, she doesn't 'properly belong with Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina on the high slopes of literature'.[16] When making **Vertigo**, Hitchcock surely had Marguerite in mind, and specifically this passage from the novel (spoken by Armand Duval):

> 'A few minutes later, as I loitered on the boulevard, I saw Marguerite at the window of one of the restaurant's large rooms: leaning on the balcony, she was pulling the petals one by one off the camellias in her bouquet.'

Armand has just been introduced to Marguerite in a box at the Opera, and now he is more than ever infatuated with this woman whom he had hitherto watched only from a distance. The moment he describes here has at least three distinct correspondences in **Vertigo**. For a start, Scottie first sees Madeleine at Ernie's Restaurant dining with Gavin, after husband and wife have been to the Opera. (Perhaps it had been Verdi's 'La Traviata', with its re-telling of the Marguerite Gautier story.) For some days after that, though, he watches Madeleine only from a distance as he trails her around San Francisco at Gavin's request (Gavin professes to be troubled by his wife's recent behaviour).

Later, shortly before Madeleine's first suicide attempt, Scottie sees her pulling apart a nosegay of flowers and throwing them one by one into the bay. The flowers appear to be largely rosebuds, i.e. not camellias, but in any case what we mainly sense from Madeleine's gesture is her feeling that her past life (with its various affairs?) hasn't amounted to much. The **surrendering** of the nosegay to the sea is thus virtually an image of the death instinct and of 'Nirvana' which, significantly, appals Scottie in the **Vertigo** novel, discussed below, where such an attitude is likened to the alleged unthinking passivity of animals.

And again, Scottie twice sees the woman he has been following appear at an upstairs window, once as Madeleine and once as Judy. The 'theatrical' connotations of these two moments suitably suggest Scottie's riveted attention - but the echo of Dumas's tale of Marguerite lends an extra touch of the timeless and of the 'archetypal'. I was reminded that Hitchcock had previously found occasion to refer to Dumas's tale when I recently re-read Adrian Martin's 1984 article on **Notorious**, where he notes how the self-disgusted Alicia in that film 'corresponds to a certain feminine stereotype leading back precisely one hundred years to Marguerite Gautier in Dumas' **Lady of the Camellias** ("I had a sort of hope I should kill myself by all these excesses")'.[17]

(iii) Hitchcock called English novelist William Wilkie Collins (1824-89) 'quite brilliant',[18] and Collins's 'The Woman in White' (1860) has been described by at least one authority as, 'in the highest sense of the term, the greatest melodrama ever written'.[19] Here, I simply want to note how that novel provides, in its haunting apparition of the woman-in-white herself, one more precedent for the numinous Madeleine in **Vertigo**; and likewise, how the opera-loving, cosmopolitan Count Fosco, whom another critic suggests is 'the most brilliantly portrayed villain in mystery fiction',[20] anticipates aspects of the malevolent Gavin Elster. Crucially, Collins helped pioneer in fiction the type of plot I've referred to as the 'big lie'.

(iv) Clearly, Thomas Mann's 'Death in Venice' (1913) resembles Jensen's 'Gradiva' in some aspects of basic plot, being about a German man who, on an impulse, makes a springtime journey to an historic seaside city in Italy (Pompeii, Venice) where he becomes obsessed with, and starts to follow around, a classically beautiful figure (the girl Gradiva/Zoe, the Polish boy Tadzio). A direct influence of Jensen's novella on Mann's seems likely, although in the case of Mann (1875-1955), he is said to have drawn on events in his own life which occurred in the summer of 1911 - to the extent that the real-life Tadzio, one Baron Moes, eventually recognised 'himself' in Visconti's superb 1971 film.[21] Also, Mann said that he partly modelled the German writer in his tale on the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler; and the tale overall shows the influence of the thought of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, both of whom Mann admired.[22]

The image of Venice in Mann's tale, like that of San Francisco in **Vertigo**, is ambiguous. Venice is

described by Mann as 'half fairy-tale, half snare'. Here again we find the same ambivalence concerning pleasure and annihilation which I've already noted of Freud and of Hitchcock's film. Thus Aschenbach, the writer in the tale, and very much an Apollonian figure, has always striven in his work to create forms which 'would body forth to men ... the mirror and image of spiritual beauty'. He might be echoing Schopenhauer's notion of great art's capacity to reveal Platonic Ideas - just as one possible function of the many mirrors in **Vertigo** is to show the viewer (Scottie, the film audience) the eternal forms hidden within temporal ones. But now Aschenbach is growing weary, and for him the nearby ocean begins to exert that part of its profound appeal that is almost sensual and 'opposed to his art ... a lure, for the unorganised, the immeasurable, the eternal - in short, for nothingness'. For the artist, to succumb to the eternal is to stop creating, and it is on this ironic note that Mann's tale does in fact end.

Yet one of the most affecting scenes in fiction - and perhaps in film - is surely Aschenbach's death presided over by a seemingly abandoned camera on a tripod, 'its black cloth snapped in the freshening wind'. Nearby, the entrancing figure of Tadzio wades into the water, and it seems to the dying man that

> the pale and lovely Summoner out there smiled at him and beckoned; as though, with the hand he lifted from his hip, he pointed outwards as he hovered on before into an immensity of richest expectation.

In it's way, this is almost Wagnerian, evoking thoughts of 'Tristan und Isolde' and Wagner's own comment on his opera that 'With the black flag that floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die'.[23] Wagner-authority Bryan Magee has no doubt that '**Tristan** really is, ... as it so obviously appears to be, all-engulfingly erotic'.[24] But Magee is equally a Schopenhauer-authority, and he has shown how the end of 'Tristan' was profoundly influenced by Wagner's reading of Schopenhauer.[25] He then makes a comment which I think is pertinent to 'Death in Venice':

> However, on the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy there is an unresolved problem posed by [Wagner's] work, and it is this: the lovers speak endlessly of unity with each other in death, but they will be united in death only in the sense that they will be united with everything and everybody else, including all the other characters in the opera.[26]

I think it's possible, and valid, to extrapolate from this the meaning attaching to the camera at the end of 'Death in Venice', and why that ending is problematic. Quite simply, the image of the black-draped camera may be said to stand both for Aschenbach at the moment of his dying - a forlorn enough sight - and for how each of the mundane photos taken by the camera has its own story to tell. (Moreover, the photographer will be back at work tomorrow, and the day after that ...) Accordingly, it seems likely that Aschenbach's 'relaxed and brooding expression of deep slumber' as he gazes for the last time on the ocean, and on Tadzio's beckoning figure, is again no more than a parody of Schopenhauerian or Nietzschean values. Of true Nirvana.

Something that reinforces my view is Magee's saying that, according to Schopenhauer, only 'compassionate, not sexual, love, a love in which the will was denied', could achieve a true oneness of individuals in this world, the world of phenomena.[27] In 'Death in Venice', we're specifically told that Aschenbach, a very one-sided man, no Superman in fact, has rejected all 'compassion with the abyss', i.e. the world at large, and that his concern has been 'with beauty only'.

Now I come back to **Vertigo**. Very much the equivalent of Mann's image of the camera is (I suggest) Hitchcock's image of the nun at the end of his film - the nun, whose black-clad figure becomes literally one of death when Judy falls from the bell-tower, yet whose valedictory line for the film's characters, 'I heard voices ... God have mercy', carries the note of Hitchcockian compassion. (Recall Hitchcock's 'enormous pity' for the sad life of Edgar Allan Poe, and - in the film itself - Midge's exclamation, 'Poor thing!', on hearing the story of 'the sad Carlotta, the mad Carlotta'. What's also significant here is how Scottie is unable to share Midge's capacity for compassion - which he seems to think amounts to merely being 'sentimental'.)[28] In a film about 'the small stuff of history', and people's brief lives, the nun's remark does bring a touch of resignation and Nirvana, but Scottie is oblivious of it.

The end of Mann's novella plays on the Schopenhauerian term 'nothingness', but I've dealt before (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 10) with the ambiguity attaching to that word both in Schopenhauer and in Hitchcock. So I want

to take up now, instead, my remark that Freud's interpretation of 'Gradiva' is very 'Freudian'. In both 'Death in Venice' and in **Vertigo** there are at least two seemingly 'Freudian' elements that in fact should be understood more broadly. I'm thinking of what is often called the oceanic feeling (which Freud paraphrased as the feeling of 'oneness with the universe'), and its concomitant notion of the dissolution of the ego. On the first of these Freud corresponded with the French writer and musicologist, Romain Rolland, but professed that he could find no trace of such a feeling in himself. However, he proceeded to characterise it as a regression to an earlier state: that of the infant at the breast. His somewhat dismissive estimation doesn't satisfy psychiatrist and author Anthony Storr ('The School of Genius'),[29] who comments drily that the oceanic feeling 'seems a more important experience than [Freud] admits'. Storr acknowledges that the feeling may indeed be related to early infantile experience of unity with the mother, but he observes:

> those who have experienced the states of mind recorded by [Admiral] Byrd and by William James record them as having had a permanent effect upon their perception of themselves and of the world; as being the profoundest moments of their existence. This is true both of those who have felt the sense of unity with the universe and of those who have felt the sense of unity with a beloved person.[30]

Moreover, Storr notes as comparable expressions of the oceanic feeling two moments from works of art - which happen to coincide with two key moments sometimes cited (e.g. by Robin Wood) in connection with **Vertigo**: the **Liebestod** from 'Tristan und Isolde' (on which, see above) and the lines commencing 'Darkling I listen' from Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' (which, as Wood notes, provided the very title of an early script-draft of Hitchcock's film).[31] I think it must be said, then, that Freud's description of Gradiva/Zoe's remark, 'I feel as though we had shared a meal like this before, two thousand years ago', as being just her convenient way of urging Hanold to recall his childhood, patently misses something of importance. (A similar remark in **Vertigo** refers ostensibly to the age of the **Sequoia sempervirans**, 'the oldest living thing', but that age also happens to coincide with the length of the Christian era, and comes on top of Scottie and Madeleine's trips to a church, an art gallery, and the cathedral-like Muir Woods itself; and the tree's name means 'ever-living', a potent term first used in English by Shakespeare.)[32]

In turn, Storr writes as follows:

> For Freud, dissolution of the ego is nothing but a backward look at an infantile condition which may indeed have been blissful, but which represents a paradise lost which no adult can, or should wish to, regain. For Jung, [though,] the attainment of such states are high achievements, numinous experiences which may be the fruit of long struggle to understand oneself and to make sense out of existence.

That alternative, or additional, potential meaning is what I wanted to draw attention to in some of the works we've been looking at, as I'm sure that Hitchcock (if not Freud) often felt its significance.

(v) A synopsis of the short novel, 'Portrait of Jennie' (1940), by American writer Robert Nathan (1894-?) is included in the useful book 'A Treasury of Literary Masterpieces' (1969), and I must confess to having read only that potted version. But of course I've seen the exquisite 1948 film, starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten, to which I'm coming. I want to mention the novella at this point, partly because it so obviously belongs with the other novellas already discussed, and partly because it may represent still others, such as Richard Matheson's 'Bid Time Return' (filmed in 1980 as the underrated **Somewhere in Time**), which I won't have further opportunity to deal with here. Also, there's at least one moment in Nathan's tale which, although 'Hitchcockian', I don't recall from the film version. Here's the synopsis:

> One afternoon Jennie appears at [the artist] Eben's studio; she has come to pose. During their conversation, Eben mentions how lost he had been at the time they first met [in Central Park]. Jennie seems upset at the word 'lost'. She says that they couldn't **both** have been lost. On returning to the room after a brief departure, Eben finds Jennie gone. He had not heard the hall door close.

Jennie's saying that she and Eben couldn't **both** have been lost seems to anticipate the moment in **Vertigo** when Madeleine laughingly tells Scottie that 'Only one [person] is a wanderer - two are always going somewhere'. And the subtle suggestion of Jennie's ghostliness, in the detail about the door, likewise anticipates the several eerie moments in **Vertigo** when Madeleine seems to disappear around corners.

(d) A brief note on 'D'Entre les Morts'

So far is Boileau and Narcejac's novel[33] from being merely 'a squalid exercise in sub-Graham Greenery', as Robin Wood unfairly calls it, that I venture to suggest that it represents one of the two or three best novels Hitchcock filmed in America - after Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca' and perhaps Helen Simpson's 'Under Capricorn'. Its most obvious progenitor is some of the work of Georges Simenon, about whom Narcejac had recently written a most appreciative study, 'Le Cas "Simenon"' (1950). All I have space to do here, though, is indicate some of the allusiveness the novel's dry (but not arid) prose and spare form offers the reader, and which Hitchcock's film in many instances incorporates. Nothing could be further from the truth than Wood's claim that 'Hitchcock took very little from "D'Entre les Morts" apart from the basic plot line'.

For instance, Wood says that 'the novel offers no equivalent for the sequoias [scene]' in the film. Not only do Flavières (the Scottie character) and Madeleine visit the Forêt de Fontainebleau (Part I, Chapter 4), although this is merely referred to, but a key scene soon follows that takes place in the Louvre. Here, the couple pass 'through a dark entrance' to where they saunter 'among Egyptian gods in the coolness of a cathedral', and they converse on the very matters that Scottie and Madeleine raise in the film's Muir Woods. Finally, Flavières and Madeleine leave the building and find themselves, 'somewhat breathless, in front of a lawn in the middle of which a sprinkler was shedding a rainbow'. (As Scottie and Madeleine leave Muir Woods, the impression given is indeed that of their emerging from a cathedral into the light, a moment soon followed by the scene on the clifftop with its piece of overt romanticism, the crashing waves.)

Moreover, Flavières now begins to feel the same 'peaceful exhaustion he had known as a boy when he had been running the whole day along the banks of the Loire'. Two points here. First, that childhood haunt includes some ancient caves, which the novel repeatedly mentions. Not only is Plato's 'myth of the cave' part of what is evoked, but at one point (Part II, Chapter 4) Flavières is reminded of how Christ's body had lain in such a cave before the Resurrection. Second, Flavières' 'peaceful exhaustion' is part of a pattern in the novel whereby he is simultaneously drawn to, and repelled by, a peculiar passivity in Madeleine which he sees as being like that of animals, which 'have no pasts and no futures' (Part I, Chapter 5). For what this signifies, we need merely look at the novel's first chapter.

The novel's equivalent of Gavin Elster is the prospering shipbuilder, Gévigne (prospering, because it's wartime and ships are at a premium). When Gévigne mentions his wife's troubling recent behaviour, in which she suddenly appears to enter a trance and her face becomes like a 'mystic's', he refers Flavières to 'a German film called **Jacob Boehme** we saw at the **Ursulines** back in the 'twenties' (Part I, Chapter 1). The reference to the mystic Boehme (1575-1624) is a key to the novel and, to some extent, to Hitchcock's film. Not only had Boehme hoped, as part of a general reformation of Christendom, to reunite Protestants and Catholics, but his writings influenced later thinkers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany and other groups and individuals like the Quakers and William Blake in England. Importantly for what I've been trying to show about **Vertigo** in this article, Boehme taught that 'will' is the original force.[34] Also, that

> Man must die to self-centredness and enter a state of total surrender ... In this state he is 'reborn'. For Boehme ... rebirth is at the heart of all processes, both in man and in the universe.[35]

But sadly for Flavières, another of the novel's themes is more pessimistic. It's true that he twice seems to come close to being 'reborn': first, when he almost possesses and 'saves' the apparently suicidal Madeleine, his mother-ideal; and again, when he starts to re-model Madeleine's look-alike, Renée, as if he were an artist 'painting the portrait of the Madeleine he remembered' (Part II, Chapter 4). But, like Hans Castorp in Mann's 'The Magic Mountain', he finally isn't good enough. (Literary scholar Frederick Hoffmann has noted how Hans Castorp, a trainee shipbuilder, becomes for the time he spends in the Swiss sanatorium, 'a student, an intellectual, **almost an artist**' - my emphasis - but then returns to the lowlands and a conventional young-man's death on the battlefield.)[36] In **Vertigo**, the failed artistic aspirations are given to Midge, but the implication concerning Scottie himself is clear.

As for Protestants versus Catholics, such a theme is just detectable in Hitchcock's film where I take it

that Scottie (whose real name is John Ferguson) is a (Scottish Lowland) Protestant who finds himself at odds, so to speak, with the film's omnipresent Catholic iconography and the yet more exotic, almost Buddhistic, passivity of Madeleine/Judy. (For more on San Francisco as a 'representative' city, see 'MacGuffin' 1.)

(e) Some cinema sources for 'Vertigo'

For convenience, these can be listed as German, French, and American - although the distinction isn't clear-cut, as we'll see.

(i) The influence of German Expressionism on **Vertigo** has often been remarked, and is anticipated in the Boileau and Narcejac novel when it refers to a German film seen in the '20s (although, as far as I know, '**Jacob Boehme**' is solely an invented film-title). Similarly, Lotte Eisner's book about such German films, 'L'Ecran Démoniaque'/'The Haunted Screen', first published in France in 1952, contains several entries on a kind of psychological vertigo. As for the actual 'vertigo' effect in Hitchcock's film, it's basically just a more elaborate subjective effect than the one used by E.A. Dupont in **Variety** (1925) and then re-worked by Hitchcock in the circus climax of **Murder!** (1930). And German Expressionism's emphasis on mother-figures, remarked by Siegfried Kracauer in 'From Caligari to Hitler' (1947), is seen in Hitchcock's film in the character of Midge. Specifically, Kracauer mentions the films **The Street** (1923) and **New Year's Eve** (1923), in both of which a man breaks down and rests his head on a woman's bosom, a gesture signifying 'desire to return to the maternal womb'.[37] It's the same gesture seen in **Vertigo** when Scottie collapses off the kitchen-stool into Midge's arms.

(ii) In an article on the Belgian director Jacques Feyder, Peter Cowie refers to an influential film made by Feyder for Films de France, **Le Grand Jeu/The Great Game** (1933). The Foreign Legion story is set mainly in Morocco, and the actress Marie Bell plays two different women. Here's Cowie:

> The film's device of having a man haunted by the vision of a blonde woman he loved, and seeing her materialize in subtly changed guise as a brunette, would be used subsequently by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac for the novel that became the basis of Hitchcock's **Vertigo**.[38]

Unfortunately, Cowie offers no evidence for his claim. So it's not clear how the alleged influence came about. In fact, the influence may have been indirect. In 1953, **Le Grand Jeu** was remade as a Franco-Italian co-production directed by Robert Siodmak (who had once shared a producer with Hitchcock, remember). The new film starred Gina Lollobrigida (with first **red** hair, then black), and was in colour. More than likely, it was the remake that Boileau and Narcejac saw just before they wrote their novel with Hitchcock in mind (on that last point, see Truffaut's interview with Hitchcock).

In the original **Le Grand Jeu**, actor Charles Vanel had a supporting role. As noted, Vanel would later play Bertani in Hitchcock's **To Catch a Thief**. In 1938 he featured prominently in the French film **Carrefour/Crossroads**, directed by Curtis Bernhardt. Like Siodmak (and Hitchcock), Bernhardt had earlier worked in Germany. He and Vanel now co-operated closely to make one of the touchstone 'big lie' films, which may well have influenced 'D'Entre les Morts' and **Vertigo**. Briefly, the plot of **Carrefour** concerns amnesia. The film's evil mastermind (Vanel) learns of a diplomat who has lost part of his memory, and sees in this an opportunity for blackmail. He employs an elderly actress to impersonate the diplomat's mother and help convince him that he has committed a crime. Parallels with **Vertigo** include the mastermind figure (whose origins lie in melodrama and its mutation, German Expressionism)[39] and the attempt to take advantage of a man's infirmity by means of an elaborate hoax, the 'big lie'. (In **Vertigo**, Judy imitates the real Madeleine, whom Gavin has murdered, and an elderly lady, possibly an actress, further helps confuse Scottie by playing the 'innocent' landlady of the McKittrick Hotel.)

Incidentally, I mentioned above how Wilkie Collins's 'The Woman in White' provided an early English version of the 'big lie' story. In fact, Collins based many of the story's details on a real-life **French** case, the sensational Douhault lawsuit of the 18th century.

(iii) If there's one American film which is the progenitor of **Vertigo**, that film is **Portrait of Jennie** adapted from the Robert Nathan novella by German expatriate director William Dieterle. The film was made at the David Selznick studio in 1947, at about the time Hitchcock was filming **The Paradine Case** there. It seems likely that Hitchcock would then have met Dieterle, whose work he had long ago admired to the point of imitation (the umbrellas scene in **Foreign Correspondent**). In any case, I feel that Boileau and Narcejac in France came to know the film and soon sensed how well its 'mystical' premise would combine with the central idea of Siodmak's **Le Grand Jeu** and other more 'expressionistic' ingredients to give them a potential Hitchcock plot in 'D'Entre les Morts'. If so, this was a brilliant insight, quite as advanced a piece of Hitchcock criticism as anything then being put forward (in the early 1950s) by André Bazin and his colleagues.

Alternatively, Hitchcock himself must have performed the master-stroke of seeing how Boileau and Narcejac's Simenon-like novel would admit of the 'supernatural' touch found in **Portrait of Jennie**. The essential point here is that Hitchcock's and Dieterle's films share much in common: for instance, their use of sea imagery. Of course, in this respect they also have a common ancestor in Hitchcock's own **Rebecca** of 1940 (and several of his English films), but their sheer similarity is further underlined by the fact that composer Bernard Herrmann worked on both. (For Dieterle, though, Herrmann composed just 'Jennie's Song' - while Dimitri Tiomkin, the film's official composer, adapted various themes of Debussy, including passages from 'La Mer'.)

Another fine American film of the '40s, making excellent use of its indebtedness to **Rebecca**, is Lewis Allen's ghost tale, **The Uninvited** (1944). Set on the coast of Cornwall and Devon, it anticipates **Vertigo** by referring to a Spanish ancestor (here named Carmel), to the **Liebestod** from 'Tristan und Isolde' (a rather sardonic touch this time), and to the sea as a place 'of life and death and eternity, too'. But what is certainly the most direct link to **Vertigo** is seen when the haunted heroine, played by Gail Russell, breaks away from her would-be protector (Ray Milland) and runs towards the nearby cliff-edge, clearly intending to commit suicide at the very place where she has been told her mother threw herself over. The spot is marked by a single, gnarled tree - a tree identical to the one we see in Hitchcock's film when Madeleine breaks away from Scottie and runs towards the cliff-edge ...

Now, there are many such 'quotes'in **Vertigo**, all of them deliberate (I suggest). Here are some more. When Scottie throws down several cushions before his fire and invites Madeleine to make herself comfortable, the moment recalls a famous scene early in **A Bill of Divorcement** (1932), the first film of Katherine Hepburn. The film's producer, David Selznick, afterwards described the scene as having given him 'one of the greatest experiences I've ever had'.[40] (The film was directed by George Cukor from the play by 'Clemence Dane', i.e. Winifred Ashton, who wrote the novel and play on which Hitchcock's **Murder!** was based.)

Near the end of **Vertigo**'s Muir Woods scene, Scottie anxiously asks Madeleine, 'Can I take you somewhere?' Her distracted response is a murmured 'Somewhere in the night' (**not** 'Somewhere in the light' as recently misquoted by critic David Sterritt). That line is the title of Joseph Mankiewicz's 1946 film noir, another movie about confusion and searching. With an amnesia theme, it resembles both **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** in the way its hero finds his search inexorably leading back to himself (although in Scottie's case, as noted, he would like to break free of all such subjectivity).[41] It's also like both those films in the way its central character is led to think himself the guilty party but finally learns he's been set up. Could Madeleine, then, have been trying to warn Scottie?[42]

Here's a more complicated instance of Hitchcock's 'borrowing'. In 1940 he directed a few scenes in the San Francisco movie **The House Across the Bay** when regular director Archie Mayo fell ill. As one of its characters is an aircraft engineer, perhaps a memory of that film occurred to Hitchcock apropos the moment in **Vertigo** when Midge mentions a new type of brassiere designed by 'an aircraft engineer down the peninsula'. Another possibility, though, is that the line was something of a private joke by Alec Coppel, who wrote an early version of the film's screenplay: the principal character in Coppel's suspense novel 'Mr Denning Drives North' had been an aircraft engineer (played in the 1951 film version by John Mills). Then again, there's a third possibility: as is well known, aircraft magnate and movie tycoon Howard Hughes once attempted to design a strapless bra for Jane Russell ...

Anyway, Hitchcock certainly had various San Francisco movies in mind when he was making **Vertigo**. Let's

concentrate on those for a bit. One of the most impressive of them is George Stevens's **I Remember Mama** (1948) in which Barbara Bel Geddes plays Katrin, the film's narrator, who is first seen in the attic of her immigrant-family's house, where she has just finished typing her first novel. Her window looks out upon the city. That's to say, Katrin, an artistic San Francisco spinster, is the prototype for Midge. Conscious of this, Hitchcock may even have deliberately transposed some of Bel Geddes's mannerisms from her earlier role, as when she ventures to criticise a patrician doctor (a bearded Rudy Vallee) and then blushes in confusion at her temerity. The corresponding moment in **Vertigo** comes, of course, when Midge suggests to Scottie's Roman-looking doctor that the use of Mozart as therapy 'isn't going to help at all'.

Underlining the connection between the two films, actress Ellen Corby, the landlady of **Vertigo**'s McKittrick Hotel, appears in **I Remember Mama** as, even then, a frail-looking but determined old maid - who aspires to marry an undertaker. (Leslie Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' says that Corby specialises 'in nosey neighbours and prim spinsters'.)

Again, Anatole Litvak's vehicle for Bette Davis and Errol Flynn, **The Sisters** (1938), features the San Francisco earthquake at its climax and has an earlier scene in which actress Lee Patrick plays Davis's empty-headed neighbour whom we hear incessantly chattering - until the soundtrack fades her voice and we see that Davis has just received a note from her husband (Flynn) saying he has left her. Similar use of the soundtrack occurs in **Vertigo**, and for an identical reason: to silence Lee Patrick, this time playing the woman at the Brocklebank Apartments whom Scottie asks about her car. (Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' describes Patrick as 'the archetypal flibbertijibbet'.)

We've already encountered director Vincent Sherman whose **All Through the Night**, starring Bogart, probably inspired the auction-gallery episode in **North by Northwest**. Sherman's **Nora Prentiss** (1947) is another San Francisco movie although it's said to be part-based on two British murder cases (presumably the Rouse and Crippen cases). Several moments in it anticipate **Vertigo**, including the moment when the lovers (Ann Sheridan and Kent Smith) head out of town. Feeling suddenly happy, the Smith character announces their destination as 'anywhere you like' - the same fate-sealing line the **Vertigo** script gives Scottie just before Judy dons her earrings and the couple drive away for the last time. (Jewellery serving as an unconscious giveaway is itself a detail taken from the Crippen case.)

Finally, I want to say some more about the work of directors Robert Siodmak and Curtis Bernhardt. In 1946 they both made films in Hollywood about twin sisters, i.e. look-alike women, respectively **The Dark Mirror** (with Olivia de Havilland) and **A Stolen Life** (with Bette Davis). The latter film, especially, anticipates **Vertigo** by having a scene set in a department store where Glenn Ford asks the 'good' sister - who secretly loves him - to try on a dress which he is thinking of giving to his wife, the 'bad' sister. The audience is acutely aware of the woman's discomfort and the man's insensitivity, a situation which obviously prefigures the **Vertigo** scenes where Judy is made over by Scottie.

Given these two directors' similarity of background (earlier work in Germany and France) and apparent shared predilection for certain themes and subjects (including crime dramas), their eventual co-operation on a project is hardly surprising: as we've already seen, Bernhardt's **Conflict** was based on a story co-written by Siodmak (with Alfred Neumann). This is the film, remember, where Bogart, who has murdered his wife, is tricked by psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet into a confession. It is, in fact, an example of the 'big lie' story, like **Carrefour** which Bernhardt had made in France before the War. We've seen how it anticipated a scene in **North by Northwest**; now let's see how it anticipates a scene in **Vertigo**.

The basis of Greenstreet's scheme is that Bogart must be made to think that his wife has come back from the dead, or, at any rate, never died. In the street one day Bogart thinks he sees his wife walk by, wearing her customary green outfit, and he follows her into a building where she enters an upstairs flat. At this point a landlady blocks Bogart's way, saying how that particular flat is vacant and is always kept locked. Bogart protests, so she leads him upstairs - where the flat indeed proves to be empty. Thus the scene exactly anticipates the McKittrick Hotel episode in **Vertigo**, where Ellen Corby plays the seemingly guileless landlady, just as it harks back to **Carrefour**, where an elderly actress impersonates the amnesiac diplomat's mother.

Presumably, in the case of the **Vertigo** episode, it represents a trick engineered by Gavin Elster to make

Scottie become even more obsessed with the mysterious Madeleine. (Actor Tom Helmore thus corresponds to Charles Vanel in **Carrefour** and Sydney Greenstreet in **Conflict**.)[43] Such a playing on a character's weakness (amnesia, a sense of impotence, obsession) is itself a characteristic of these films. To end on, then, here's a more general example of a film anticipating **Vertigo**. Robert Siodmak's **The Great Sinner** (1949) is loosely based on an aspect of Dostoyevsky, and stars Gregory Peck as a man held captive in the Wiesbaden casino by his new-found mania for gambling. With beginner's luck he wins a fortune, but, as the casino's wily proprietor had foreseen, soon loses it again. Later he is visited in the casino grounds by the apparition of another victim who says, in effect, 'I told you so'. In all of this I see not so much a set of direct parallels with **Vertigo** as a significant general ambience common to several such films. For instance, gambling or infatuation or vertigo itself are recurrent motifs. When Peck finds out his weakness for gambling, it's like the moment when Scottie, clinging to a San Francisco rooftop, suddenly finds out he suffers from acrophobia. And when Peck wins a fortune only to lose it, this isn't so very different from how Scottie 'wins' Madeleine from death and then loses her. As for the wily proprietor, he of course harks back to German films of the '20s (and Hitchcock's **Spellbound**), as well as making common cause with all the other mastermind figures we've noted. Above all, as the ghostly apparition in the casino grounds could testify, what these various films most share is perhaps their general sense of worldly entrapment - a snare disguised as a fairy-tale.

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Notes

1. A. Trodd, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Moonstone' (World's Classics, 1982), p. xiii.

2. S. Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (1991), p. 20.

3. If Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jordan** borrows from Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case**, even in matters of casting (Joan Tetzel appears in both films), Bernhardt's **High Wall** (1947) is indebted in matters of plot and characters to Hitchcock's **Spellbound** (although Audrey Totter is no Ingrid Bergman).

4. Entry on Dieterle in L. Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' (all editions).

5. Cf. J. Gassner and D. Nichols (eds), 'Twenty Best Film Plays' (1943), p. 694.

6. V. Burgin, 'Diderot, Barthes, **Vertigo**', in V. Burgin, J. Donald, and C. Kaplan (eds), 'Formations of Fantasy' (1986), pp. 85-108. Accompanying the text is an illustration of John Everett Millais's painting, 'Ophelia' (1851), included for comparison with Madeleine's attempted watery suicide in **Vertigo**.

7. R. Wood, 'Fear of Spying', in 'American Film', November 1983, pp. 28-35, reprinted, slightly revised, as 'Male Desire, Male Anxiety: The Essential Hitchcock', in M. Deutelbaum and L. Poague, 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986), pp. 219-30.

8. P. Wollen, 'Hitchcock's Vision', in 'Cinema' (U.K.), No. 3, June 1969, pp. 2-4.

9. D.O. Chankin, 'Delusions and Dreams in Hitchcock's **Vertigo**', in 'Hitchcock Annual' (1993, Ohio), pp. 28-40.

10. F. Nietzsche, quoted in N.O. Brown, 'Life Against Death' (1959), Chapter VIII.

11. It's sometimes overlooked that Freud isn't writing art- or literary- criticism primarily, but psychoanalysis! Still, he had read Schopenhauer, and in some of his later writings put emphasis on the destructive aspects of the death instinct.

12. D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 39. The quotations from Hitchcock in the text, concerning Poe, are also from this source.

13. K. Miller, 'Doubles' (1987), pp. 154-66.

14. See Schopenhauer's Appendix ('Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy') to his 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. 1. Schopenhauer adds 'that Kant's teaching gives the insight that the beginning and end of the world are to be sought not without us, but rather within'.

15. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (1990), p. 573. Paglia adds that Ligeia 'defies God's law of mortality because she, not he, is the resurrection and the life'.

16. D. Coward, Introduction to A. Dumas **fils**, 'La Dame aux Camélias' (World's Classics, 1986), p. xix. This novel has a strong tinge of necrophilia, a fact which may also have been in Hitchcock's mind when he was designing **Vertigo**.

17. A. Martin, 'Reading **Notorious**', in 'Filmviews' (Melbourne, Australia), No. 119, April 1984, p. 9.

18. Quoted in N.P. Hurley, 'Soul in Suspense' (1993), p. 293.

19. H.P. Sucksmith, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Woman in White' (World's Classics, 1973), p. xx.

20. A. Peterson, 'Victorian Masters of Mystery' (1984), p. 46.

21. This dramatic moment was recounted by film critic Gilbert Adair in an English Sunday newspaper in 1990. It's possible, though, that it isn't wholly accurate. Monica Stirling, in her study of Visconti, 'A Screen of Time' (1979), pp. 214-15, gives a different version of events: 'About ten years after Thomas Mann's death [in 1955], his daughter Erika received a letter from an elderly Polish nobleman, Count Vladislav Moes, saying that friends had recently given him the Polish translation of a novella in which he himself, his sisters, all his family were minutely described.' But it seems that Count Moes was 'not in the least offended'.

22. There's a good short entry on Mann in the Oxford Companion to English Literature, where the influence of both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is commented on. Cf. note 35 below.

23. Quoted in B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 355.

24. Magee, p. 363.

25. Magee, pp. 354-63.

26. Magee, p. 363.

27. Magee, pp. 363-4. Mind you, as Magee adds, 'Wagner was aware of this inconsistency with Schopenhauer's teaching, and he considered it was a point on which Schopenhauer was wrong ... that sexual love is also a way in which the will can be led to self-awareness and self-denial'.

28. Scottie, in Midge's words, is 'the hard-headed Scot'. Now, Sir Kenneth Clark says in his 'Civilisation' (1969), p. 182, that 'The Scottish character ... shows an extraordinary combination of realism and reckless sentiment' - a remark which explains a good deal about Scottie. But sentiment is not sentimentality, and it's the latter of which Scottie, for whatever reason, is so suspicious. Actually, I think Scottie lacks both love **and** compassion.

29. A. Storr, 'The School of Genius' (1988).

30. Cf. note 27 above.

31. The Keats passage was discussed in 'MacGuffin' 7, in my article on **Suspicion**.

32. At least, that's my understanding of the entry in Chambers English Dictionary that designates the term as being from 'Shak[espeare].'

33. Translated into English by Geoffrey Sainsbury as 'The Living and the Dead' (1956).

34. See the short entry on Boehme in the Oxford Companion to English Literature. Norman O. Brown's 'Life Against Death' frequently cites Boehme in the context of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, et al. For example, in Chapter VIII: 'Boehme conceived of God's life as it is in itself as play. Eternity is the mode of play.' Cf note 10 above.

35. H. Popper, 'Jacob Boehme', in R. Cavendish (ed.), 'Man, Myth & Magic' (1970), p. 302.

36. Cf. F.J. Hoffmann, 'Freudianism and the Literary Mind' (1959), p. 212. Hoffmann says that Hans Castorp's stay in the sanatorium frees him from 'bourgeois time' and 'directs his attention inward'; and that 'Mann, from his reading of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and his observation of the powerful effect of Wagner's music, participates in the nineteenth-century romantic-irrational revolt against the sanctity of consciousness'.

37. See, in particular, illustration 22, and accompanying caption, in Kracauer's book (Noonday edition, 1959).

38. P. Cowie, 'An unfading talent: Jacques Feyder', in 'The Movie' (1982), p. 2403.

39. Cf. E. Bentley, 'The Life of the Drama' (1969), p. 214.

40. Quoted in R. Behlmer, 'Memo From: David O. Selznick' (1969), p. 74.

41. The sequence in **Vertigo** this most brings to mind is, of course, the one in which Scottie trails Madeleine to his own front door. But there's also, for example, the episode in which Scottie's pursuit leads him to the McKittrick Hotel, with its Scottish name.

42. Alternatively, or in addition, Madeleine may have been playing up to Scottie's 'Wagnerian' side. Magee emphasises that for Wagner 'night' represents the noumenal (as opposed to phenomenal) realm, the place of 'permanent reality'. See the analysis of 'Tristan und Isolde' in Magee, pp. 358-61.

43. Sydney Greenstreet was not actually the **evil** mastermind figure in **Conflict**, though. But he was certainly that when he played Count Fosco in Peter Godfrey's 1948 film of **The Woman in White**.

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ODD SPOT: VARIATIONS ON A THEME

Just for the record, here's how three reviewers saw the futuristic Los Angeles of Ridley Scott's **Blade Runner** (1982). 'A cross between Newark and old Singapore' (Pauline Kael, 'Taking It All In'). 'A cross between a Hong Kong street-market and a decaying 200-storey Metropolis' (David Pirie, in "The Time Out Film Guide'). 'A cross between Chinatown and a Max Ernst fantasy' (David Shipman, 'The Good Film and Video Guide').

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 12 February-May 1994 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £3

EDITORIAL

Twelve issues in, and the time has come to throw a few punches. There's an 'Early Hitchcock' season starting around Australia, and I asked some media people to try and use the occasion - in an incidental way - to let Hitchcock fans know that a publication exists that might interest them. You see, the Mensa-authorised 'MacGuffin' has no advertising budget, being strictly non-profit-making. At the same time, it seems to me that we're the most knowledgeable periodical about Hitchcock's films that's going. And perhaps I should have said that long ago. For the fact is that so far not one of those media people has given us a plug. (Thanks Keith, Deborah, David ...)

I tell you, the situation feels a bit like being walled-up in the **Psycho** house with just Norman Bates for company!

But even that wouldn't matter too much, I guess, if it weren't for some other recent non-developments. See 'Letters' in this issue, for example. And how about a big mention to those academics in Australia who run 'Hitchcock' courses and to whom I've suggested that they subscribe to 'The MacGuffin' - only to be ignored by them? (Thanks Barbara, Noel, John ...)

Finally, one last punch (or whinge, depending on how you see it). Speaking of non-replies, I wrote two letters recently to the American author of the book 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', which is reviewed in this issue. Both letters were full of praise for the book, and I had simply hoped that maybe I would get back an acknowledgment of my interest, if not a 'MacGuffin' subscription. In fact, I got nothing. (So, thanks, Dr P., up there ...)

Meanwhile, below, we toil on. As you read this issue, do try to see past the typewritten newsletter-format (which has thrown quite a few people) to the substance beyond. The Hitchcock film analysed this time is **The Paradine Case** (1947). I think that we're the first publication to point out the film's basis in two notable English murder cases, and its depiction of a couple of leading forensic figures of the early twentieth century.

As for the ongoing references in 'The MacGuffin' to the philosopher named Arthur Schopenhauer, I find it necessary to insist that these **aren't** hare-brained or frivolous or irrelevant to Hitchcock's films. And, yes, I have read some history of philosophy ...

Here's a thought about the great English essayist and aesthete, Walter Pater (1839-1894), whose work was praised by Oscar Wilde. One of Pater's best-known sayings is 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'. In view of Hitchcock's repeated emphasis in interviews on the art of 'pure film', and on analogies between film and music, I suggest that you keep Pater's saying in mind when you read the review of 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality'.

To everyone, good viewing.

LETTERS

(Editor's note. Just two letters this time, for reasons of space. Normally, being a modest fellow, I wouldn't have run the first letter. But, in view of the second, I've revised that policy. Evan Williams is film critic for 'The Australian'. The second letter concerns an inquiry of mine about why the BFI saw fit not to renew their 'MacGuffin' subscription after issue no. 10.)

Evan Williams, Killara, NSW, Australia.

Your article on the sources of **Vertigo** in issue no. 11 was the finest and most absorbing piece of Hitchcock scholarship I have read for many years. It should establish 'The MacGuffin' as essential reading for film writers and historians ...

* * *

Fiona Bolt, Periodicals Librarian, British Film Institute, London, England.

Every new journal title we receive is assessed at a monthly meeting, where various members of the library staff can comment and make recommendations for each title. ... [A]lthough acknowledged as an excellent journal of its type, 'The MacGuffin' was considered to be too specialist in its subject-matter to fall within our selection criteria, especially as we already have such a vast amount of material covering the work of Alfred Hitchcock.

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

The return of Ealing

For many years the premises of the former Ealing Studios in suburban London have been used by the BBC to produce television programmes. Recently a company bought the site with the aim of making at least six quality features and documentaries per year in the Ealing tradition.

According to the Managing Director of Ealing Studio Productions, Alan Latham, the venture has the support of the industry and of such actors as Ian Richardson and Alan Bates. Anyone who warmly remembers such films as **Dead of Night** (1945), **Kind Hearts and Coronets** (1949), **Whisky Galore** (1949), and **The Titfield Thunderbolt** (1952), will appreciate the enthusiasm that the projected Ealing revival is sparking.

Alfred Hitchcock would surely approve. The influence of the famous Ealing comedies is clearly visible in his own **The Trouble With Harry** (1956).

The man who inspired 'Dead Poets Society' comes to Australia

Robin Williams played him in Peter Weir's film, but Dr Sam Pickering, 52, from Connecticut, is as large as life and living in Perth, Western Australia - on sabbatical leave. In fact, it seems he can't **stop** teaching, for that's what he's doing at the moment, teaching Creative Writing at the University of WA.

Dr Pickering smiles a lot (in his press photos, at least), but he isn't uncritical of the work of some of his academic colleagues. 'There's a lot of poor writing masquerading as profundity in US literary criticism', he says.

And about the film? 'It's a morality play. It says that if you crush creativity at a critical stage you destroy something valuable, but I don't know that that's so. Creativity gets out.'

'Uncle Charlie' dies

In Alfred Hitchcock's **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943), the villainous Joseph Cotten character called Uncle Charlie is based on the real-life serial killer, Earle Nelson, who was hanged at Winnipeg in 1928.

But the **name** given to the character in the film, Charles Oakley, apparently represents a good-natured joke on Hitchcock's part - for it belonged to his jovial Scottish friend, Dr Charles Oakley, who recently died, aged 92.

Dr Oakley, a qualified engineer and psychologist, was one of a group of enthusiasts who contributed to the development of the British film society movement in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a founder member of both the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council. Another of his good friends was the famous documentarist, John Grierson.

New editor for 'Zoetrope'

In a letter, Jane Pitt tells us that she has had to relinquish editorship of the newsletter of the British Mensa Film SIG. Jane says that, apart from seeking a publisher for the novel she recently co-authored, she is directing a Mensa review. Her successor as editor of 'Zoetrope' is Wilson Fraser, who lives in East Lothian, Scotland.

Good luck for the future, Jane.

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BOOK REVIEW

Price, Theodore: 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality: His 50-Year Obsession with Jack the Ripper and the Superbitch Prostitute - A Psychoanalytic View' (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J., & London, 1992; hb only, 416pp.).

All fine ladies are witches.
- c. 1800

Or bitches. Theodore Price notes, with regret, that Hitchcock often used that word to describe the heroine-victims of his films. Hitchcock meant that such women are whores at heart. In flippant mood, he once referred to the notorious murderer, Dr Crippen, by saying that all he had done was 'get rid of his bitch of a wife'. Now, the fact that Crippen was a doctor (of sorts), and his unfaithful wife a music hall singer who aspired to be in opera, may explain why, in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956), the script makes James Stewart a doctor, and Doris Day, playing his wife, a retired musical comedy star who wants to stage a comeback. That film is essentially about a shaky marriage, and Price thinks that most of Hitchcock's films contrive to give the impression of Marriage as Hell.

Again, in **Frenzy** (1972), the rapist-murderer Bob Rusk (Barry Foster) calls women 'all the same ... bitches!' Mind you, he's not unbiased: according to Price (p. xiii), Rusk is 'clearly' in love with the film's leading man, Dick Blaney (Jon Finch)! Of the two women whom we see Rusk kill, one is Blaney's ex-wife and the other is his mistress, just as in **Strangers on a Train** (1951), Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) is in love with Guy Haines (Farley Granger), and the woman we see **him** strangle is Haines's 'tramp' of a wife. Here, too, Hitchcock seems to have detected a real-life precedent, the case of the world's most famous Killer of Prostitutes, Jack the Ripper. Throughout the book, Price uses the term 'film of its own' (FOIO) to refer to certain recurrent Hitchcock themes, and for the crucial Jack the Ripper theme there are actually two FOIOs: **The Lodger** (1926) and **Frenzy**. But even in the unlikely case of **Vertigo** (1958), the prostitute-figure Judy (Kim Novak) may be heard to say warily to Scottie (James Stewart), 'You don't look much like Jack the Ripper'.

In sum, the short title of Price's book is misleading, inasmuch that Hitchcock and Homosexuality is just a special case of the misogyny component in the films[1] - and even to speak of Hitchcock's misogyny is also misleading (I suggest) if acknowledgment isn't made of such heroic or spunky women as Juanita Cordoba in **Topaz** (1969) and Erica Burgoyne in **Young and Innocent** (1937). Equally, besides the grotesque Hitchcock mothers such as Mrs Sebastian in **Notorious** (1946) and 'Mrs Bates' in **Psycho** (1960), you have the admirable mothers like Juno Boyle in **Juno and the Paycock** (1930) and Jill Lawrence in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934) - while Mrs Brenner in **The Birds** (1963) is a bit of both.

Right at the start, then, I must make one of my two main criticisms of the book: it does distort. (My other criticism is related, and concerns the book's failure to go 'beyond psychoanalysis'.) Even so, I find it splendid. Most of the time, Dr Price explores his chosen key Hitchcock themes with rare originality and concreteness. If 'MacGuffin' readers have wondered lately just what I would put in place of all the under-informed or arch or dismally abstract academic books and monographs on Hitchcock - which usually say so little - 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' may serve as my answer. I think it's easily the best study of the director since Tania Modleski's 'The Women Who Knew Too Much' and Lesley Brill's 'The Hitchcock Romance' (both 1988), possibly even since Robin Wood's pioneering 'Hitchcock's Films' (1966). Significantly, Dr Price, who's a 70-year-old widower from New Jersey, says on his Acknowledgments page that he has had little help or sympathy from his academic colleagues.

So, whatever my criticisms of the book, the main thing is that most of what it says is richly suggestive of Hitchcock's psychology, and even of just why he once claimed in a moment of candour that only marriage to Alma (née Reville) had stopped him 'going gay'. Now read on.

Importantly, Price has seen all the films. As early as the book's second chapter he lists in detail how together they comprise a massive (Anti-) Marriage Cycle. I was struck by his description of **Downhill** (1927), which Hitchcock based on a play by the gay Ivor Novello and the actress Constance Collier. The film is divided into three sections: (1) The World of Youth, (2) The World of Make Believe, and (3) The World of Lost Illusions. In the first section, set in an English public school, two lads are best friends until one of them gets a waitress at the nearby tuck-shop into trouble, and the other lad (played in the film, as on stage, by Novello) takes the blame and is expelled. In the second section, the expelled young man works as a bit actor in a theatre; when his godmother dies and leaves him £30,000, the theatre's leading lady (Isabel Jeans) agrees to marry him, although as soon as the money runs out she ditches him for another guy. In the third section, the young man finds work in France as a gigolo and must sleep with rich, elderly women who - Hitchcock shows - look particularly ugly in daylight. Finally, the young man returns home where his stern father welcomes him, saying that his innocence is now known. The young man is even permitted to play football for the Old Boys.

Sheer melodrama - but illuminating. I've included the above synopsis, based on Price's, because it almost seems to represent a prototypical Hitchcock film. Such things as the initial hint of Eden (here both lost **and** found again); the embryonic 'wrong man' motif; the theatre-as-world metaphor; the theme of betrayal, which puts special emphasis on the fickleness of women; the picaresque format; and finally, the quasi-Oedipal resolution - these things suggest it might almost be **Stage Fright** (1950) or **North by Northwest** (1959) being described. But Price naturally wants to stress the misogynist elements, which he does thus: 'the story is really about two schoolboy homosexuals, one of whom betrays the other by going straight; that is to say, making love to women' (p. 44). And thus: 'we can say ... that this Downhill journey is that of the nice young public school homosexual ... all the way to the bottom: having to sleep with women!' (p. 46)

Beyond question, Novello's play gives Hitchcock's film a gay basis. My two main concerns with how Price explicates this fact are: (1) that he's rather cavalier about individual details (and not for the only time in the book); and (2) that he never ventures, in this section or elsewhere, to suggest the director's specific attitude to the material (e.g. indulgent, mocking, distanced).

First, as to details. It isn't true. as Price claims, that the two schoolboy best friends are called Roddy and Robin. Novello's character **is** called Roddy but his best friend is called Tim. (It's the actor's name which is Robin.) Nor, as far as I know, are the two friends ever characterised as gay: such

a relationship is merely potential. When Price claims that it's 'from English public schools that the slang term "fag" derives' (p. 44), he's guilty of false etymology. The term he refers to, in the sense of 'male homosexual', comes from the French 'fagot', a bundle of sticks, thus evoking the time when homosexuals were burned with witches at the stake.[2]

Likewise, neither the tuck-shop waitress nor the theatre actress are shown by the film to be prostitutes, yet Price implies it by putting both occupations in quotes and commenting elsewhere in the book that these are typical Hitchcock metaphors for prostitution. In other words, any job in which a woman appears in public can provide such a metaphor (cf. the shop-girl Judy in **Vertigo**). It's a very fluid concept Price is using here, although one which (by and large) does seem to fit the films. Nevertheless, I'll suggest below that it needs to be seen against a conceptual fluidity of Hitchcock's own.

Second, as to the director's attitude to his material. **The Lodger** had seemed both to mock its campy main character - Novello again - and to empathise with him in his predicament (especially when he was being hounded by the mob). I would have liked Price to say whether something similar occurs in **Downhill**, but he doesn't. We know that Hitchcock himself didn't attend public school, and that he came from a London shopkeeping-class background. So it's likely that his attitude to many scenes in **Downhill** would have been detached if not actually critical. As his career developed, Hitchcock certainly cultivated detachment - especially about anything that was either abnormal or potentially embarrassing. His television writer, James Allardice, once noted this, adding that 'by the very act of being detached, he takes the curse off any horror or brutality [in his pictures] that might otherwise offend'. Price's book naturally makes you wonder about the sources of that detachment.

Class probably had a lot to do with it, for Hitchcock always remembered that he was Cockney-born. (Hence his fondness for such things as jokes and rhyming-slang.) Other likely factors include his sense of being a British immigrant after he moved to the US; his self-consciousness over his life-long weight problem; and, yes, some sexual factor - for instance, his married life was largely celibate. But Price discusses none of this, probably because he thinks it irrelevant. If I don't, quite, it's because I see Hitchcock's detachment as a powerful factor in freeing his imagination - and his 'negative capability' (that which Keats praised in Shakespeare) ...

* * *

Elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', I analyse **The Paradine Case** (1947) and suggest that the essential thing about the valet André Latour (Louis Jordan) isn't, as Price thinks, his gayness but his celibacy. Hitchcock seems to draw a parallel between the 'unnatural' situation that had prevailed at 'Hindley Hall' and the paralysis and sterility that in **Rebecca** (1940) descend on 'Manderley' - where even the butler Robert (Philip Winter) is having trouble with his teeth. In one of Price's four 'scenarios' for **Rebecca**, the head of Manderley, Maxim (Laurence Olivier), is not just impotent but gay. It's an extreme interpretation. As I've indicated before (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 5, pp. 1, 12), the aristocratic and idealistic Maxim seems the very model of your monogamous Englishman who's effectively traumatised when he finds that his 'polymorphous-perverse' first wife has been unfaithful. As in **Downhill**, the basic situation can bear the label 'misogynist' but the characters are only potentially (or latently) homosexual.[3] By the same token, what's again highly suggestive is that the author of the original work, here Daphne du Maurier, was a (married) lesbian - just as the author of 'The Paradine Case', Robert Hichens, was gay, a friend of Oscar Wilde and, later, Somerset Maugham.

We have to come back to the matter of Hitchcock's attitude to his material. I think that a case can be put for how the oft-remarked 'sadistic' side of Hitchcock needed these 'gay' - and 'old-fashioned' - stories[4] in order to comfortably transform them. Now, I know that sadism is itself sometimes linked to homosexuality (e.g. by Dr Edmund Bergler), but not invariably! And, in any event, what I now want to do is turn to the case of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912), one of literature's most famous misogynists. Strindberg is mentioned several times in 'The Paradine Case', allowing Price (p. 8) to suggest parallels between the mistress-valet relationship in Strindberg's 'Miss Julie' (1888) and the relationship of Mrs Paradine and André Latour in Hichens's novel. Of Strindberg himself, the first thing I'd note is that, despite his misogyny, nobody to my knowledge has ever suggested that he was gay. The two attitudes aren't synonymous.

Next, something which helps explain why Strindberg married and divorced three times: he has been called by biographer-critic Robert Brustein intensely 'dualistic'.[5] Like the Romantics of Mario Praz's 'The Romantic Agony' (1933), Strindberg early split his 'mother' in two - into the chaste Madonna and the erotic Belle Dame Sans Merci (of Keats). Later, he 'vacillated between an intense worship of the female and an even more intense misogyny'. There's a parallel with Hitchcock, inasmuch that Price says of the latter that he hated, yet was attracted to, two kinds of women: the Virgin Bitch and the Whore Bitch (p. 183).

Further, in Brustein's view, although there was much more to Strindberg's inner dualism than his attitude to women - seen outwardly in his desire to dominate and be dominated - if we project that dualism onto the whole of his drama, 'we shall be able to understand his development from Naturalism to Expressionism, ... from a convinced misogynist to a resigned Stoic with compassion for all living things'. In other words, we'll be able to see the evolution of his drama from tormented problem-plays like 'Miss Julie' to the marvellously comprehensive, and almost Buddhistic, vision of works like 'A Dream Play' (1902). If, as I think, there's a drive towards comprehensiveness in Hitchcock, too, I'll want to suggest below that at times Price confuses such comprehensive vision with 'homosexuality' ...

* * *

In Hitchcock, there's an almost mystical opposition between 'closed' and 'open', between concentration and aspiration. If I say that the 'closed' tendency in his work signals a wish to 'keep it all in the family', such 'incestuousness' will probably be seen as another symptom of his potential homosexuality! Still, the tendency **is** marked. In 'MacGuffin' 3, I noted it in **The Lodger** and in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) - while pointing out that it can also be found in the works of Dickens, who's another author (and father of twelve children) about whom nobody has ever said that he was gay. Here's another instance. In **The Paradine Case**, I think it's significant that Mrs Paradine's family solicitor, Sir Simon Flaquer (Charles Coburn), turns out to be 'old friends' with the policeman on the case, Chief-Inspector Ambrose. And an example of Price's: in **The Birds**, manly Mitch (Rod Taylor) 'had been going for awhile with a perfectly eligible young woman (Susanne Pleshette); yet nothing happened, Taylor having preferred to stay at home with Ma and Little Sister' (p. 89).

I'll deal below with the 'open' aspect of Hitchcock's films. First, though, let's look at Price's very relevant chapter on 'The Father-Daughter Theme', which concerns Hitchcock's 'Griselda Complex' (p. 229), 'where the Father is in love with the Daughter and refuses her to any and all suitors'. I'll also bring in some of Price's comments on **I Confess** (1953). When Hitchcock's only child, his daughter Patricia, married a young Massachusetts businessman, Joseph O'Connell Jnr, in 1952, Hitchcock insisted on 'directing' every detail himself of the wedding ceremony in New York's St Patrick's Cathedral (p. 233). This, despite there having been some tension between father and prospective son-in-law over the latter's non-interest in entering the film business (which Hitchcock had offered to arrange). As further evidence of Hitchcock's 'possessiveness', Price cites how, in the late '40s and early '50s, Hitchcock never once attended any of actress Pat's three Broadway appearances - here Price gives a Freudian interpretation of public 'exposure' in a theatre (an interpretation which seems to square with my reading of the coming-out ball scene in **The Lodger**, in 'MacGuffin' 3).

Now, as soon as Pat married away from him, Hitchcock turned to making **I Confess**. Price notes how this is the story of a terribly-wronged man, one who has elected to serve God and become a priest, i.e. celibate. In the film, the married woman tells her husband, 'I don't love you. I've never loved you.' And to her former lover, the priest/'father', she says, 'I [still] love you. I've always loved you.' (p. 270)

Equally suggestive is the film's casting. For the role of the priest, Hitchcock chose the handsome gay actor Montgomery Clift; for the priest's Double, the real murderer, he cast another homosexual, O.E. Hasse; and for the priest's ex-lover, he wanted the star of the 1950 Swedish film of Strindberg's 'Miss Julie', blonds actress Anita Björk, but finally had to settle for Anne Baxter.

Also, **I Confess** seems to confirm a significant preoccupation of Hitchcock's - noted in Price's chapter on **Rebecca** - with the Shakespeare tragedy, 'Othello'. Actually, Price somewhat misleadingly coins the expression The Othello Theme as an alternative name for The Virgin/Whore Theme (p. 167), referring to how

women allegedly betray men. As Price shows, the 'Rebecca' novel does indeed equate its hero Maxim with Othello; and there's a strong hint, in the same source, that Rebecca herself had been a lesbian - being described by Maxim as 'not even normal'. But, as any Shakespeare fan knows, the betrayer in 'Othello' is actually the Moor's shifty soldier, Iago. Which brings me back to **I Confess**. When the villainous Keller (O.E. Hasse) shoots his wife Alma (Dolly Haas) because she has informed on him, there seems to be an echo of how in 'Othello' Iago stabs his wife Emilia for telling the Moor that all along Desdemona has been innocent. And here's another thing. While Hitchcock was making **I Confess**, Orson Welles's **Othello** won the Grand Prix at the 1952 Cannes Film Festival. In Welles's film, reports Charles Higham, 'Othello is a noble human being doomed by his involvement with the repressed homosexual Iago' ('The Films of Orson Welles', 1970, p. 137). Considering that Welles began shooting **Othello** in 1948, it's likely that there would have been plenty of occasion for Hitchcock to hear of the idea and consider its possibilities.

* * *

In order to show both the fluidity and the 'openness' of some of Hitchcock's filmmaking, I'll comment on another of Price's examples of The Othello Theme. Price notes that in the 1969 **Topaz**, Rico Parra (John Vernon), 'most Othello-like, kisses his betraying, double-agent mistress before killing her' (p. 168). But here's news for Price. The original of that scene is probably an episode recounted by the title-character in W. Somerset Maugham's short story 'The Hairless Mexican' (which was filmed by Hitchcock, although without the episode I'm referring to, as **The Secret Agent**, 1936). Suddenly aware, the character says, of being betrayed by the woman he loved, whom he now saw to be a spy, he had been forced to pass his knife 'across her lovely throat'. The 'Romantic Agony' of the moment is conveyed in this passage:

> And I loved her, I loved her; oh, words cannot tell you the agony of desire that [had] burned in my heart; love like that is no pleasure. It is that heavenly anguish that the saints speak of when they are seized with a divine ecstasy. I knew that she must not leave the room alive ...

With this reference to sexual desire that is transformed into something else, something seemingly divine or transcendental, I can come back to the second of my two earlier reservations about Price's nevertheless fine book. Approximately, the reservation is this. When Hitchcock once said that 'everything's perverted in a different way', he scarcely meant that homosexuality is a perversion of heterosexuality, or vice versa - although that's how those things may appear to most of us. Rather, he was implying that both of them, along with sexuality in general, are only 'perversions' or 'representations' of something more fundamental, something (it seems to me) that is best conceptualised by Arthur Schopenhauer's post-Kantian philosophy of Will (life-force) and Representation (appearance). When I said before that Price's book doesn't go 'beyond psychoanalysis', I had in mind how, time and again, he seems to equate 'not obviously heterosexual' with 'therefore homosexual' - surely a reductionist position.

Put the matter this way. In psychoanalysis, which is patient-centred, sexuality is basic. But a film can take other optics, i.e. ways of seeing, and surely often needs to do so. I do think that Price fails to appreciate the 'mystic' and the 'abstract' areas of Hitchcock. Moreover, in saying this, I think I'm just following the lead of Keats and Kierkegaard, both of whom said of Shakespeare that he was exceptionally 'objective' (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10) - an assessment made, on their part, with no reference to psychoanalysis ...

The **Topaz** scene has a couple of further ironies. I've suggested that it's based on an anecdote told in Somerset Maugham's 'The Hairless Mexican' - where the title-character is called General Carmona although it's far from obvious that he's a general in fact. He dresses like a dandy and has smooth skin like 'a woman's'. In Hitchcock's **The Secret Agent**, the character is played by a campy-looking Peter Lorre. In turn, the General's co-agent, Ashenden, is played by another real-life homosexual, John Gielgud. And in both story and film, Ashenden wonders whether his companion can 'really be the lady's man he pretends'. More likely, the General represents a parody of the story's gay author - in much the same way that Ashenden, by Maugham's own admission, is the author's flattering self-portrait.

So here's what I suggest. The General's 'romantic' anecdote of killing his lover should be seen as

literally camped-up or as an allegory (of, say, a seduction rather than a killing, and the 'victim' an unlawful object, perhaps a boy).[6] In which case, the story's mention of 'heavenly anguish' and 'divine ecstasy' is largely a blind. But now see what Hitchcock does with it. When you look at the novel 'Topaz', by Leon Uris, you find that there's no murder of his double-agent mistress, Juanita Cordoba, by the Cuban officer, Rico Parra, only a scene in which he tries to make love to her before picking up the telephone and reporting her to the authorities. In other words, Rico Parra turns out to be impotent ('I have this trouble all the time', he cries), and the scene is a classically Oedipal one. Price would naturally say, 'well, there you are'.[7] For my part, I would want to stress Hitchcock's facility and detachment.

As Hitchcock said in a different context, you could study the scene forever. Notice, for instance, the emphasis again on doubles (here, Rico Parra and his Frenchman rival), at least one of whom **may** be gay. Typically, too, one of them is married - although, in the case of **The Secret Agent**, that's only because Ashenden has officially been given a wife as 'cover'! And the killing of the mistress recalls Oscar Wilde's 'each man kills the thing he loves', about which Hitchcock once said that he thought it represented a quite common phenomenon. (I think Schopenhauer would agree.) Finally, you remember that Juanita's wrenching death is filmed from overhead, an angle which shows her sinking to the ground with her dress spreading around her like a stain. That stain, which of course suggests the life-blood, also signals something more, an unseen dimension. Hitchcock might well have described the moment as raising 'the commonplace in life to a higher level' (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10).

* * *

Price never seems to greatly appreciate Hitchcock's sense of humour, which is essentially an **English** humour. About Charters and Caldicott (Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne) in **The Lady Vanishes** (1938), he says that they're 'simply traditional, stock, sissified characters whose obvious lack of interest in women makes them the butt of screen comedy about their gayness; and Hitchcock certainly intends the comedy to be so taken' (p. 57). My own feeling is slightly different. Basically, I think that this pair of 'upper-class twits' show several common English male traits (including Anglomania and xenophobia) - traits **too** common, most of them, to be inherently gay. And it's the **situations** the pair get into, situations which compound their various follies, that make them look so out of place. One example: their avid discussion of English cricket on a train in central Europe that's on the brink of war. Another example: their appearing late for dinner in a remote Alpine lodge, wearing tuxedos. As for their evident lack of interest in women, it's more accurately described as an evident lack of interest in sex - another (supposed) common English male trait. (For example, Charles Barr's 1977 book on Ealing Studios notes that producer Michael Balcon actually preferred to avoid sexual situations in his films.) If, ten years later, the pair are in fact dubbed 'the heavenly twins' by their Army colleagues (in Alfred Roome's **It's Not Cricket**), such seeming reference to their gayness may only show how debased the nature of their comedy has become.

Likewise, Price thinks that the pipe-smoking Nigel Bruce characters in **Rebecca** and **Suspicion** (1941) are gay, again using the term 'sissified' to describe them. He does this by speaking of their 'sissified, Franklin Pangborn, Edward Everett Horton demeanour' (p. 59) - whereas, surely, there's both an ocean and a world of difference between the English actor and his two American colleagues.

* * *

I want to end by saying more about the concentration/aspiration dichotomy in Hitchcock's work - a twin-emphasis on the one and the many which sits nicely with Schopenhauer's twin themes of Will and its Representation. Like many of Hitchcock's films, **I Confess** is set in one main locale, here the city of Quebec. That city becomes in the film a metaphor for the Lost Paradise. Now, Price ascribes Hitchcock's choice of locale to the fact that Quebec was the only city in North America where priests still wore the cassock, i.e. dressed like men in drag (p. 270). Which, of course, is another way of saying dressed like women. But I prefer the latter description because I think it better suggests what Hitchcock intended. As we've already had occasion to notice, he was always fascinated by situations whose meanings might suddenly imply their reverse. Another example would be his 'Nirvana'-like endings (e.g. **Suspicion**, **Psycho**) which involve a character seeming to happily accept her/his own death. (Cf. Schopenhauer's

emphasis, in his ethical writings, on the desirability of turning the individual will back upon itself.) On a more purely technical level, too, Hitchcock liked to explore contraries, as in those films (e.g. **Young and Innocent**, **Notorious**, **Psycho**) where the camera moves from very far away to very close.

The start of **I Confess** intimates a host of possibilities. Across water (the city is built at the confluence of two rivers), the camera drifts in disembodied fashion towards a mass of buildings, seen in near-silhouette, dominant among which is the Chateau Frontenac - which will figure in the film's climax. That Chateau, in latter days a hotel, is named after the former French governor of New France. As many people know, Quebec has a considerable military history: it had just recently been retold in J.E. Morgan's book, 'The Castle of Quebec' (1949). On the film's soundtrack, women's voices sing, siren-like ...

What's going on here? The play of contraries, as I say. A distant-view is becoming a close-view. **Women's** voices accompany a **disembodied** (non-subjective) camera-movement which directs our attention to a dominating '**masculine**' building on the skyline. That skyline includes also a lone church spire, so that the general effect is neither wholly 'secular' nor wholly 'religious', as well as being ambiguously 'sexual'. Moreover, and in keeping, there's at least one other Hitchcock film being evoked here, albeit (as Price would say) pre-consciously. That film is **Rebecca**. The massive building drawing towards us is like 'Manderley', or even Camelot, i.e. a fabled Heaven-on-Earth. And at first the river seems to bar our way, like a gate or a moat. But the moving camera presses on. Suddenly, as the opening titles fade, the film-proper begins, and with a cut we're taken inside Quebec City at night. Now the only troubling thing is that we find ourselves in dingy back streets (not quite what we had been led to expect). That is, until the camera tracks into an open window. As Dimitri Tiomkin's score gives a brassy screech, we see a man's dead body.

I think Price is largely wrong to regard **I Confess** as being about a gay priest who takes holy orders as a refuge. (The Father-Daughter reading is incidental, of course.) That interpretation makes nonsense of Michael Logan's heroism, both in the war and subsequently. Nevertheless, the nuance of homosexuality is present, for reasons I've indicated (e.g. the casting). Given that we're all, psychologically speaking, both male **and** female, perhaps Hitchcock's intention in the film is to show that Logan 'went gay', i.e. stopped being a practising heterosexual, as a result of what he saw in the war. After all, he's also something of an Othello-figure, i.e. a sensitive and noble man, like the appalled Maxim in **Rebecca**.

Anyway, my reason for describing the opening sequence of **I Confess** was to indicate the sheer evocativeness of that Lost Paradise film, something which I don't think Price takes the measure of. The film's use of Quebec anticipates **Vertigo**'s of San Francisco - the latter a city described by Oscar Wilde as having 'all the attractions of the next world'. Also, 'with its missions, forts, shops, and art galleries, San Francisco may ... stand for perennial human concerns' (as I further noted in 'MacGuffin' 1). Here's my point, then. From about the 1950s, Hitchcock's films became increasingly comprehensive and, in a sense, 'open'. Sometimes it was basically a matter of a single motif or scene: the 'evolution' references in **The Wrong Man** (1957),[8] the United Nations episode in **North by Northwest**, the visual analogies between people and birds in **The Birds**. But at times there were further Expressionist nuances: for example, as provided by the chill wind that blows through **Psycho** and the succeeding three films (see below). **Vertigo**, of course, was the richest film of all. Despite his name, Scottie is something of a Sinologue, who has the Chinese symbol for 'double happiness' in the railing outside his front door, and who tells Madeleine/Judy that 'the Chinese say that once you've saved a person's life you're responsible for it forever'.

But that's an irony, too. For Scottie is no more capable than the rest of us of suspending his human nature - tinged, in his case, with sadism. He 'kills the thing he loves' because he's never the true artist, the one of sufficient 'negative capability' to dwell (as Keats says) 'in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after ... reason'. Accordingly, Madeleine/Judy must be punished. She has betrayed him. She's a bitch.

I've given Schopenhauerian readings of the end of **Vertigo** before (in 'MacGuffins' 1, 3, 11). This time, I'd just like to note how that equally notorious misogynist, Strindberg, offers a related keynote. Running through Strindberg's great 'A Dream Play' is the refrain, 'Humankind is to be pitied'. It's the

same note of compassion at which Schopenhauer arrived, and after a not dissimilar survey of the evidence (including Buddhist texts). Strangely, I think it comes close to also being the real message of later Hitchcock: hence such things as the above-mentioned chill wind in **Psycho**, **The Birds**, **Marnie** (1964), and **Torn Curtain** (1966).[9]

Price thinks that Scottie in **Vertigo** could very well be gay. After all, he's a bachelor and obviously having trouble relating to women. On the other hand, by Price's own description, the reason 'why Hitchcock's films are perennially so popular - with both sexes, and with gays as well (sic)' is that they project a universal (childhood) desire to sleep with the parent of the opposite sex (p.197). In very many ways, in fact, Hitchcock's films offer something for everyone (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10); and by the time their director has finished with them, they all preclude **any** simple or obvious reading.

Except this. They start and end as manifestations of Will, both literally (the filmmaker's and the film's Will) and figuratively (the Will of the characters, events, etc., as Saul Bass's near-abstract titles-sequences may help suggest). In between, they're about Representation. It's in this area that Price comes into his own. I've not been able to deny the basic accuracy of his thesis - only try to give it a perspective that I felt was missing.

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Notes

1. Price himself points this out in his Introduction, p. x.

2. Cf. Chambers English Dictionary. For more information, see D. Altman, 'Homosexual' (1971), p. 32. (Altman is an Australian academic and gay activist whose book has been widely published, including in the US.)

3. In 'MacGuffin' 5, I likened Maxim to a character in the Australian film, **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (Peter Weir, 1975), the Hon. Michael Fitzhubert - whose maiden-ideal, Miranda, disappears at the Rock (cf. the sea in **Rebecca**), whereupon the lordly youth departs morosely, tantamount to his committing suicide. (The novel by Joan Lindsay actually quotes from 'Rebecca' when it says of Miranda that she had a face 'like a Botticelli angel'.) I also suggested of **Rebecca** that it hinges on the 'danger' that Maxim won't fulfil his expected role of patriarch/father. Hence the sterility that descends on Manderley, now dominated by the evil-mother figure (and seeming lesbian), Mrs Danvers, and where the men are all impotent (e.g. Maxim, 'Barmy' Ben).

4. A further example: Hitchcock's **The Manxman** (1929), based on the novel by the gay Sir Hall Caine. The novel was hugely popular in its day, but is now both unread and (almost) unreadable.

5. Brustein's 'The Theatre of Revolt' (1964) is a justly celebrated work. The quotations from it in the text come from the long excerpt reprinted in R. Brustein (ed.), 'Strindberg: Selected Plays and Prose' (1964).

6. Cf. how in Maugham's semi-autobiographical 'Of Human Bondage' (1915), Philip Carey's club-foot serves as a metaphor of its author's gayness (and his stammer).

7. For a comparison of Rico Parra with André Latour in **The Paradine Case**, see my analysis of the latter film in this 'MacGuffin'.

8. See 'MacGuffin' 6. At one point, Manny's wife (Vera Miles) reports how her dentist has told her that people's teeth have evolved at a different rate from their jaws, causing (dental) problems. There's also an 'evolution' (or 'zoological') motif in **The Birds**, of course.

9. In **Marnie**, Mark Rutland (Sean Connery) says to Marnie (Tippi Hedren), 'It's time to have a little compassion for yourself' - implying the need for a more general compassion, too. See also the above-mentioned analysis of **The Paradine Case**.

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Best of 1993

Here we go - three leading Australian critics (and 'MacGuffin' subscribers) give their top ten or twelve films of last year. The three critics are: Adrian Martin, Tom Ryan, and Evan Williams. Only a couple of films appear on all the lists (**The Age of Innocence, Unforgiven**). Tom's list originally appeared in 'The Sunday Age'. There, Tom noted that true heroism was a quality distinctly lacking in the bulk of last year's films ...

Tom's list

1. The Age of Innocence (Martin Scorsese, USA)
2. Unforgiven (Clint Eastwood, USA)
3. Best Intentions (Bille August, Sweden)
4. Stolen Children (Gianni Amelio, Italy)
5. Tilai (Idrissa Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)
6. La Belle Noiseuse (Jacques Rivette, France)
7. Lorenzo's Oil (George Miller, USA)
8. Much Ado About Nothing (K. Branagh, UK)
9. This Is My Life (Nora Ephron, USA)
10. Sleepless in Seattle (Nora Ephron, USA)

Evan's list

1. The Piano (Jane Campion, Australia/NZ/France)
2. Unforgiven
3. The Age of Innocence
4. Naked (Mike Leigh, UK)
5. Of Mice and Men (Gary Sinise, USA)
6. Blade Runner (1981/1993) (Ridley Scott, USA)
7. Pandora's Box (1927/1993) (G. Pabst, Germany)
8. Tous Les Matins du Monde (A. Corneau, France)
9. Damage (Louis Malle, France)
10. Salo (1975) (Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italy)

Adrian's list

1. Night and Day (Chantal Akerman, 1991)
2. The Bed You Sleep In (Jon Jost, 1993)
3. The Age of Innocence
4. Unforgiven
5. Passage á l'acte (Martin Arnold, 1992)
6. The Double Life of Veronique (Kryzstof Kieslowski, 1992)
7. Les Amants du Pont-Neuf (Leos Carax, 1991)
8. Le Jeu de L'Oie (aka Snakes and Ladders, Raul Ruiz, 1980)
9. The Inner Circle (Andrei Konchalovsky, 1991)
10. Reservoir Dogs (Quentin Tarantino, 1992)
11. The Rapture (Michael Tolkin, 1991)
12. Hard Boiled (John Woo, 1992)

[Supplementary to Adrian's list ... 'four great films re-seen and rediscovered on TV': **Minnie and Moskowitz** (John Cassavetes, 1971); **Une Histoire Immortelle** (Orson Welles, 1968, French-language version of **The Immortal Story**); **On Dangerous Ground** (Nicholas Ray, 1952); and **Sweet Smell of Success** (Alexander Mackendrick, 1957).]

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BLOOPERS

Here are the correct overseas subscription rates for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual'. Individuals: US $9 per year. Institutions: US $12. And here are the rates for US subscribers. Individuals: US $7, or $12 for two years. Institutions: US $10, or $17 for two years. Write to: P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA.

In 'MacGuffin' 8, p. 13, we said that Hitchcock's original idea for **Torn Curtain** (1966) was to base the film on the Burgess and MacLean spy scandal in England, and to tell the film from the viewpoint of 'Mrs Burgess' after she finds that Guy Burgess is a spy and has fled to Russia. In fact, there **was** no Mrs Burgess - Guy Burgess was an unmarried homosexual. It was Mrs **MacLean's** viewpoint that Hitchcock had in mind.

In 'MacGuffin' 8, p. 3, we said that the 16 minutes trimmed from the original length of **The Paradine Case** (1947) included a party scene. That was incorrect. According to David Thompson's recent book on producer David Selznick, the cuts to **The Paradine Case** consisted largely of extended footage at 'Hindley Hall', the Paradines' country-house.

Not so much a blooper as an oversight. Last issue, in the 'Bloopers' section, we noted that Edmund Gwenn's brother, Arthur Chesney, was also an actor. Chesney had in fact appeared in a Hitchcock film himself - namely, **The Lodger** (1926), where he plays the heroine's father.

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The Lost Paradise: Hitchcock's 'The Paradine Case' (1947)

And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'll lay me doun and dee.

- William Douglas (1672-1748)[1]

Orson Welles once said that the main theme of Western art is the search for the Lost Paradise. Something he probably had in mind was the legendary quest for the Holy Grail - which for centuries has provided a major motif of European and Middle-Eastern art. More or less separate from it, though, is an iconography based on traditional Persian and Old Testament images that show Paradise as a walled garden. Welles's own films contain many examples. Of these, the most obvious is 'Xanadu' in **Citizen Kane** (1941), recalling the private pleasure-grounds of the Persian kings.

Of course, the point of that film is that Kane doesn't find happiness in Xanadu. What he's really seeking is his lost childhood - represented by the famous image of him when a boy playing in the snow with his sled. Although Welles later called the idea 'tinpot Freud', it's worth spelling out. Playing in the snow suggests warm feelings of satisfaction and competence (yet still, in this case, with a mother-figure keeping a watchful eye nearby). Kane's sled has a robust, 'masculine' shape and function - yet is given a feminine name, 'Rosebud'. That's to say, possessor and possessed, male and female, are one! Then there's another thing. In terms of iconography, 'Rosebud' is a flower. And the snow lying all around is itself a kind of garden.

But did someone mention a womb? That's scarcely a new idea either. A 15th-century French painting depicts the Garden of Eden as not just walled but womb-like - and shows Adam and Eve being expelled into the world. Sadly, in Welles's **The Immortal Story** (1968), set in Macao, the wealthy merchant Mr Clay simply can't appreciate the truly rich suggestiveness of a conch shell ...

By the same token, Mr Clay needs constant interaction with other people just to carry on his business. The importance of cities to the Lost Paradise is that they provide another substitute (like Xanadu) for 'original pleasure'. With their wealth and opulence, cities too are important Lost Paradise symbols. The fact that they were traditionally walled helps reinforce the idea.

Actually, the port of Macao makes a doubly suitable symbol. As the oldest European colony in the Orient, there's the nice irony that all it succeeded in becoming was one more 'Western' trading- and recreation-centre (if you will, a brothel)[2] - something was still 'lost'. At the same time, the proximity of Macao to the sea almost turns it into yet another Lost Paradise symbol, an island. It's fair to say that islands are basically 'gardens' surrounded not by walls but by water. Yet that proximity of the sea, like Mr Clay's conch shell, is indeed suggestive. It can serve as a reminder of all humanity's restlessness and yearning, arguably the very condition that both raises and dashes our hopes of Eden's recovery.

Othello (1952) is a key Welles film, set partly in Venice. And Venice, built on a group of islets adjoining the Adriatic, is your quintessential Lost Paradise city. (As Nicholas Roeg's 1973 **Don't Look Now** tells us in a line of dialogue, Milton himself 'loved this city'.) What Welles's adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy does is simply remind us that in this fair spot lurks Iago with his evil.

I can sum up what I've been saying by telling a brief anecdote. I once showed a group of film-students Luchino Visconti's **Death in Venice** (1970). Afterwards, I put up on a screen for discussion a colour

slide of the film's sailor-suited youth, Tadzio, sitting pensively amid the Venice glasswork in the lounge of the Hôtel Excelsior. (For much of the film, of course, Tadzio is trailed around the city by the literally stricken composer, Aschenbach.) By Tadzio's side was a vase of Hydrangeas on a pedestal, the latter of a twisting design and made of turquoise. One student commented that 'it reminds you of the serpent in Eden'.

* * *

Alfred Hitchcock's films were full of Lost Paradise imagery from the start. His first feature was **The Pleasure Garden** (1925) whose title refers **inter alia** to a London night-club of that name, with its female dance-troupe. From London, though, the melodramatic and sometimes violent plot moves to Lake Como and to the tropics, before finally returning to London. For the film's credits, Hitchcock designed the image of a snake entwined around a tree.

Hitchcock's last-but-one film, **Frenzy** (1972), was set in London's **Covent** Garden. In a key scene, the presence of an apple suggests the misogynist thoughts of the murderer, Bob Rusk (Barry Foster). And in between these two films came many others, such as **Rebecca** (1940), whose famous line, 'We can never go back to Manderley', is particularly resonant. **I Confess** (1952) displays how the fair city of Quebec may conceal a murderer, whose occupations are sacristan and part-time gardener, and who seems at one point to be likened by the film to Shakespeare's Iago. As for **Topaz** (1969), what's literally central in it is the island of Cuba, where the hero, André Dévereaux, has his mistress - and which serves as a Lost Paradise metaphor for the goings-on (political and sexual) throughout the film. I'll come back to most of these films later.

* * *

The plot of **The Paradine Case** concerns a charge of murder brought against Maddalena Paradine (Alida Valli) and her eventual trial at London's Old Bailey in which she's defended by the famous barrister, Anthony Keane (Gregory Peck). But I think what's really on trial in Hitchcock's film is the institution of marriage and, beyond that, the flawed human condition. Keane has been married for eleven years to Gay (Ann Todd); their idyllic honeymoon was spent in Venice. There, it seems they mainly occupied themselves riding in a gondola - which the film likens to a bed. If that strikes an ambiguous note, an echo is soon heard when we learn that the marriage has been childless. What has happened? Robert Hichens's novel (1933), the basis of the film, gives some clues. It refers to such matters as Gay's shrinking from the ugliness of life, and her husband's ambitiousness which conceals a latent egoism. In other words, both partners have still some growing to do.

Soon, too, other facts about Keane emerge. He jokes with Gay about his 'lost ideals', about how he no longer cares to mock 'the decadence of the rich'. Could he himself be in danger of succumbing to that decadence? Or, at least, of flirting with it? The very first time he meets his rich and beautiful client, Mrs Paradine, who was born in Italy, we sense that he's starting to become infatuated with her. Behind her mask-like expression, Mrs Paradine hides a deeply passionate nature.[3] Her role in the film may recall what the Italian critic and scholar, Mario Praz, in his book 'The Romantic Agony' (1933), calls the cult of the Fatal Woman. That book is indeed about Decadence, being a study of the legacy of de Sade and the perverse and pathological elements in Poe, Swinburne, Wilde, etc. (Camille Paglia calls it 'a major book'.) From the film's opening scene, Mrs Paradine is associated with serpentine camera-movements and with opulence. We watch as the camera enters her Portland Place town-house (with its curved front), tracks past two ornamental hallstands, both of them entwined with carved snakes, and arrives in the sitting-room where the mistress of the house is alone, playing a grand piano. A full-length portrait of her late husband, Colonel Paradine, dominates the room. She will shortly be charged with his murder.

* * *

In order to analyse the film further, it may help if I give some background about the novel and its sources. Robert Hichens (1864-1950), music critic and author of 66 books, is best remembered for 'The Green Carnation' (1894), a satirical account of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, in whose circle he

moved; and for 'The Garden of Allah' (1904), a romance about a wealthy English lady and a man with a guilty secret, who meet in North Africa and marry, but who fail to find happiness thereby. The latter novel was thrice-filmed, the last time in 1936 when its producer was David Selznick.

Further, Hichens wrote a celebrated ghost story, 'How Love Came to Professor Guildea' (printed in 'Tongues of Conscience', 1900), in which a celibate academic is haunted to death by a repulsive female spirit who addresses him through his pet parrot. That story shows Hichens's misogyny, an ingredient which reappears in two of his novels where women poison their husbands. One of those novels is 'Bella Donna' (also thrice-filmed), the other is 'The Paradine Case'.

According to Leonard J. Leff ('Hitchcock and Selznick', 1987), the novel of 'The Paradine Case' was 'based on a scandal that rocked the legal circles of London'. I rather think he means the case of Madame Fahmy, a Frenchwoman who in 1923 was acquitted by a British jury after she'd shot and killed her husband, a wealthy Egyptian prince, at London's Savoy Hotel. At the trial, evidence was given that the prince had treated his wife badly. Also, the prince had kept a male secretary with whom he was rumoured to have had a homosexual relationship. The fact that Madame Fahmy herself seems to have been a woman of loose morals was not disclosed to the jury - the famous advocate Edward Marshall Hall (see below) had obtained a Judge's ruling which prohibited this information from being introduced in Court.

Hichens's novel, though, neatly combines elements of the Fahmy trial with aspects of the famous 19th-century case of Florence Maybrick, a young American woman found guilty of poisoning her English husband with arsenic. The Maybricks had married in the USA but eventually settled at 'Battlecrease House' outside Liverpool, where they lived comfortably. Once again, the husband seems to have had a violent disposition - probably the result of his invalidism and chronic hypochondria.[4] But what's also probable is that he began to suspect his wife of having an affair with a Mr Brierly (with whom, early in 1889, she had spent three nights in a London hotel). Mrs Maybrick was eventually condemned to be hanged but, largely as a result of public protests, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. In 1904 she was released, after which she wrote a book called 'My Fifteen Lost Years'.

At least as important to Hichens's novel as these two specific cases is the real-life precedent for the antagonism between the defence barrister, Keane, and the trial Judge, Lord Horfield. That antagonism clearly reflects the differing temperaments of England's most celebrated 20th-century criminal defender, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, and his period's most famous criminal Judge, the chilling Mr Justice Avory. Of Marshall Hall, you hear that he 'was handsome, excitable, and at his best when able to identify himself strongly with his client's cause'.[5] He was adept at playing on a jury's emotions: in the Fahmy case, for example, his dramatic final speech contained flagrant appeals to racial and sexual prejudice. And of Mr Justice Avory, you hear that having been a merciless criminal prosecutor, he 'became an icy Judge, one who disregarded all except purely legal considerations'. He was called a 'hanging Judge', something that the novel's sadistic, as well as lecherous, Lord Horfield certainly is. So, too, is Horfield in Hitchcock's film, where he's played by Charles Laughton. The fact that, strictly, the burly Laughton isn't physically suited to the part (the novel describes Horfield as 'slim', and photographs of Mr Justice Avory show a hungry-looking man), may seem immaterial to most of us; nor, I think, does Laughton's tendency to jolly-up the character spoil matters.[6] More regrettable, though, in terms of drama, is a failure of David Selznick's bowdlerised script to really bring out the barrister-Judge antagonism. In the novel, Keane develops a justified loathing of the Judge even **before** the Paradine case comes to trial.

* * *

You sometimes hear another criticism of the film, that it's 'old-fashioned' ... This time, the problem lies in distinguishing a clearly **intended** stylisation and 'period' flavour from what, I agree, is some weak characterisation and a further 'undramatic' tendency - whereby the film seems too readily to endorse 'home and hearth' values as the norm. (But that may just be part of the film's emphasis on 'Englishness'.) More specifically, I find Gay's character under-developed and priggish-seeming; and I suppose you could say that there's something arch about the presentation of the mysterious Fatal Woman, Mrs Paradine. Still, that presentation is the film's very **donnée**, and how it's seen should depend on how you understand the film itself ...

Old and new are combined from the start. Behind the credits, whose lettering is in both Gothic and modern styles, we see the Judges' Bench of the Old Bailey. The traditional mace is put up, indicating that a case is being tried. (The mace will be removed at the film's end - I've already said what I think is really on trial during the film.) Above and flanking the Bench are its pediment and scrolled columns. These things, too, become fully integral when later they're 'rhymed' in some non-courtroom scenes - notably when the story moves for a time to the Paradines' ancestral home in Cumbria, the imposing 'Hindley Hall', whose front door is set off in the same neo-classical manner. In general, the juxtaposing of old and new elements tells us that whatever we see at a given moment, and in a particular place, is likely to be both complex and yet just a fragment of the whole picture. Which seems appropriate in a film about the Lost Paradise ...

The film's London is especially fragmented, having many differing styles and moods. Time and again, a scene begins with an establishing-shot of a corner of a building, a stretch of the Thames, a part of a skyline - but never the same shot twice. (By contrast, the Cumbria interlude begins and ends with the same wide-view of the countryside.) We see the city by day and by evening, and in many weathers. Also, this being England, we're repeatedly reminded of class and class-differences. Take the first of the scenes set in Holloway Women's Prison where Mrs Paradine is being held. One windy day Keane arrives there with the Paradine family solicitor, Sir Simon Flaquer (Charles Coburn), to meet his client. As their tall English car (**not** an ordinary taxi, I think) enters the prison yard, we have time to appreciate the old trees and battlemented facade towering overhead - Holloway Prison was an old building even in Dickens's time. (Other aspects of its grim exterior will be glimpsed later in the film.) Inside, Keane and Sir Simon mount a wide staircase while cleaning-ladies scrub the vestibule nearby. Sir Simon is heard saying that Mrs Paradine has 'an almost mystic calm'.

Shades of **Vertigo** (1958). That's another Hitchcock film in which a man senses that a woman of almost mystic calm, and hidden fires, can help (as he says) 'put it together'. Also, in both films the man identifies the woman with the past yet comes to believe that she can free him of it.[7] In this respect, we'll see that the Hindley Hall scene in **The Paradine Case** is as ambiguous as the literally gloomy Muir Woods scene in **Vertigo**.

* * *

I've said that Gay Keane seems priggish. That's as much the fault of the film as of the character, so far as the two can be separated. (Ann Todd's performance doesn't greatly help - but even she complained to the producer, Selznick, that he was over-dressing her in some scenes.) Until near the end, the poor woman isn't allowed to show what she can do, even if it's just play tennis. Her most vigorous action consists of towelling her husband's hair after he comes in from the rain. On the stairs on that occasion, she starts to greet him with enthusiasm but then barely pecks him on the cheek - ostensibly because she's dressed for the evening and he's soaked. The film's point seems to concern a fastidiousness that Gay has inherited from her upper-class background. As she towels Tony's hair and talks of what's 'nice', she remembers the evening he first called on her - and the horrified look on her mother's face because he had 'forgotten to dress'. In contrast, Keane now calls himself, with a touch of smugness, 'the greatest realist in the country'. (Cf. Scottie's reputation in **Vertigo** for being 'the hard-headed Scot'.) The rest of the film is going to teach Keane a lesson, and thereby begin to break down the class-barrier between him and his wife that her mother seems unwittingly to have reinforced those dozen years ago.

When Keane becomes infatuated with Mrs Paradine - who, like him, married into the upper class rather than belonged to it by birth - both Gay and Sir Simon see what's happening but are powerless to intervene. Parallels of the situation abound in Hitchcock's work. For instance, in a scene that visually anticipates one in **Topaz** between Nicole Dévereaux and her husband (concerning her knowledge of his Cuban mistress), Gay comes upon Keane and Sir Simon discussing their client. In fact, though, 'discussing' is hardly the word. So incensed is Keane at Sir Simon's suggestion that Mrs Paradine is a woman of 'rather easy virtue', that he calls his friend 'an insufferable snob'. Gay both hears all of this and sees her husband, foot on chair and with a wave of his pipe, strike an over-assertive pose that he'll later repeat at Cumbria when he seeks to berate the valet André Latour (Louis Jourdan) for much the same reason - for impugning Mrs Paradine's name.

Someone else who sees what's going on is Sir Simon's daughter, and Gay's best friend, Judith Flaquer (Joan Tetzel). She speaks of Keane as riding to Mrs Paradine's rescue like a knight in armour. Also, she thinks that 'men who've been good too long want to wallow in the mud'. The real reason for Keane's going to Cumbria, she suggests, is that he's 'after' Mrs Paradine's secret lover, Latour.

* * *

Judith means that Keane is jealous of Latour. She doesn't mean - despite an innuendo of Theodore Price's - that he could be sexually interested in the valet! By the same token, there's no doubt (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10) that Latour is either gay or essentially celibate, or both those things. The trap-driver who takes Keane to Hindley Hall twice calls Latour 'a queer one', who 'keeps himself to himself'. For Latour's part, he had apparently been well satisfied to serve his master, the blind war hero, Colonel Paradine, with the utmost devotion and loyalty - a loyalty betrayed only once when Mrs Paradine had seduced him. And yet, Keane's sole bent, not unmixed with sadism, soon becomes one of saving Mrs Paradine from the gallows by accusing Latour of the murder instead. There's a real-life parallel in Edward Marshall Hall's appeal to racial and sexual prejudice in order to save Madame Fahmy.

In the Hichens novel, the Latour character (there called Marsh) is described, despite his misogyny, as 'a very masculine male who ... would stand no nonsense from anyone'. He had been 'jilted' on his wedding day by his prospective bride, who had run off with another man. Thereafter he had turned to a life of celibacy, including a spell of war service. I mention all of this because I think it's how Hitchcock basically saw the character too. There seem to be parallels with **Rebecca**. For instance, Keane knows of Latour's **possible** homosexuality from the moment Sir Simon tells him that the valet had guided the Colonel's every step 'like a mother hen'. In **Rebecca** a similar phrase is used by Maxim (Laurence Olivier) to describe his pipe-smoking but fussy estate-manager, Frank Crawley (Reginald Denny) - but where what is being evoked by the film is a general **sterility** that descends on Manderley after Maxim kills his promiscuous first wife. The sterility is the essential thing. That situation echoes Arthurian legend and its 'Dolorous Stroke' which devastates three kingdoms - and which causes the magician Merlin to prophesy that its disastrous effect will be overcome only when a knight of great purity attains the Holy Grail.[8]

Well, neither the temper-prone Maxim, nor the 'knight in armour' who has 'been good too long', Keane, is really a potential Sir Galahad. That's another reason why - to anticipate, now - in both films Paradise will stay lost. Nevertheless, the respective situations at Manderley and Hindley Hall clearly fascinated Hitchcock. In them, some of his own darkest preoccupations could merge in a complex Romanticism.

It's to the scenes at Cumbria - Hindley Hall in particular - that I come next.

* * *

Keane's trip to Cumbria provides another situation that has many parallels in Hitchcock's work, virtually all of them turning on the Lost Paradise idea. In **The Wrong Man** (1957), Manny's hopeful return to the up-State resort, now lying under snow, has a disappointing outcome. So it proves with Keane's trip. Such 'disappointments' correspond to those incurred in 'the tropics' during the last half of **The Pleasure Garden** and most of **Under Capricorn** (1949),[9] at Soda City half-way through **Saboteur** (1942), at the even more ironically-named Gabriel Valley in **Spellbound** (1945), on the country excursion in **I Confess**, at Prairie Stop in **North by Northwest** (1959), and on the island of Cuba in **Topaz**. And we've seen that Hindley Hall is another Manderley - Franz Waxman's music serving as a reminder. The Paradines had lived here, childless, until just before the Colonel's death, which had occurred on one of their occasional visits to London. In a parodic way, **Latour** had been their 'child'. At the same time, to quote **The Trouble With Harry** (1956), being really an adult, he had needed to be 'horribly good'. Eventually, tragedy had invaded this Eden, too, as something similar is going to befall the Keanes (when the novel will mention how 'Evasive Gay' 'had thought to dwell for ever within the glades of the Garden of Eden' - Chapter XXXII).

Keane's trip to Cumbria recalls **Topaz** quite specifically insofar as Dévereaux's Cuba visit involves (espionage) business but is really (a) to see his mistress, the widow of a hero of the Revolution, in her

villa; and (b), if possible, to have a show-down with his rival, Rico Parra (John Vernon), a strong-willed military man from the 'other' (political) side. Of course, Mrs Paradine isn't at Hindley Hall during Keane's visit - but her 'presence' is. In fact, it's clear that Keane is so kinky about Mrs Paradine that even her house attracts him; and that his vindictiveness towards Latour is so great that he'll unconscionably try to destroy him. Keane's cruel streak is mentioned in the novel - where cruelty is also attributed to the Judge, to the Colonel, and to 'the best of us' (Chapter XXIII).

The moral superiority in the Cumbria scenes is all on the side of the valet. When Keane arrives at the Hall, he's immediately caught out in an untruth by Latour, who has answered the door to him. Later, Keane will tell Latour that he hadn't expected to find him there, which is another untruth. (Recall Judith Flaquer's remark about the real reason for Keane's trip.) As for the valet himself, contra his usual dignified bearing, he tends in Keane's presence to skulk in shadow and to be shown making unorthodox late-evening visits to the barrister's lodgings (arousing Theodore Price's grave suspicion). Examine these scenes carefully, though, and you may find they simply show Latour's feeling of having been 'degraded' (Hitchcock's word) by Mrs Paradine. As he tells Keane, he supposes the barrister to be her emissary. That Mrs Paradine still fancies the valet is one of the courtroom revelations made later.

Inside the Hall, Keane removes his hat in the panelled hallway. The gesture anticipates Arbogast's in **Psycho** (1960), and is made in similar intimidating circumstances - as if the premises were a church or a palace. A tight-lipped housekeeper shows Keane around. A window in the gallery affords them a view of the Lake District. Such a view would normally be rich in poetic association but here mainly suggests, as the novel says, 'life closing in on a man'. (Cf. how in **Psycho** 'they moved away the highway'.) In turn, you would think that the note of melancholy would put paid to any immediate prospect for an Earthly Paradise. Yet soon a decadent version of it appears. Mrs Paradine's vast bedroom, and the adjoining bathroom, show an odd, but grand, mixture of Elizabethan and Italianate styles. Keane is understandably transfixed by what he sees. Situated amid sheepskin rugs (for which, deplorably, 250 Iceland sheep were killed), it's dominated by an oval portrait of Mrs Paradine herself, set into the bed head. That image is positively funerary - like the ones on gravestones in Italian cemeteries. The cult of the Fatal Woman is here enshrined. But that isn't to say that the film necessarily endorses it. Mrs Paradine is a murderer, and the glimpse the scene gives us of 'Nirvana' or 'easeful Death'[10] might well be called as treacherous as any the Hitchcock canon has to offer.

As it happens, a reverse kind of 'love-death' (inflicted by a man on a woman) climaxes the Cuba sequence in **Topaz**, and mention of that film may return us to the matter of how Latour and Rico Parra are alike. When Latour visits Keane at the inn one windy night, his reason for calling so late concerns how the trap-driver would have spread the word about who Keane is (and the nosy innkeeper's wife would have helped). Latour has no wish to be seen publicly in the company of Mrs Paradine's barrister. Accordingly, Theodore Price's suggestion that Latour is really a homosexual prostitute seeking out a rich upper-class client is grossly misleading - and I mean 'grossly' - on at least two counts. As noted, Latour is essentially celibate. And Keane, although he's moderately wealthy, has already told Mrs Paradine that he doesn't consider himself a member of the upper classes.

No, the point of the scene lies elsewhere. Latour comes to the inn in order to answer Keane's questions and, if possible, to tell him the truth as he understands it. That he doesn't fully succeed is more Keane's fault than his. Keane starts by trying to dominate Latour. But then he finds that this man is easily a match for him in will-power (a point also made in the novel). Just as, at a dinner held by Lord Horfield earlier, Keane had refused the Judge's offer of a cigar and said that he would prefer to smoke a cigarette, so here Latour altogether refuses Keane's offer of a cigarette. (Keane: 'You don't smoke?' Latour: 'I **won't** smoke, sir. Thank you.')[11] Eventually, resorting to schoolboy invective in which he calls Latour a 'dirty, lying sneak', Keane asks the valet to leave. The latter's insistence that Mrs Paradine is 'bad to the bone ... an evil woman' has roused Keane to fury. His fists are clenched.

What other point has the scene? I've already called Latour 'horribly good', and I suspect he represents what the novel calls 'a monster' - the unselfish man. ('The unselfish man is always half feminine, and something of a monster' - Chapter VII.) In this scene Keane is given the opportunity to learn some home-truths: not that he's secretly gay (for heaven's sake!) but rather that he's capable, like everyone else, of bigotry. Hitchcock once said that 'everything's perverted in a different way', and Keane, with

his egoism and cruelty and selfishness, has his fair share of perversions, whatever their Romantic basis. The wind that howls about the inn and which rattles the shutters before Latour's arrival simply sets the scene for the confrontation that follows, of 'monster' and 'man'. A further - traditional - point, of course, is that these two individuals are really almost 'doubles'. That's how it is in **Topaz**, too, with the French civilian Dévereaux and the Cuban military man Rico Parra - both of whom are sexually troubled and both in love with the same woman.

Again, I think it's interesting to speculate whether, in choosing to film the literally stormy scene in **The Paradine Case** in this way (from a bare hint in the novel), Hitchcock wasn't remembering the central epiphany in David Lean's memorable **Great Expectations** (1946). There, one stormy night, the character Pip (John Mills)[12] discovers the true nature of his 'expectations' when he's confronted by his doppelgänger, and secret benefactor, the returned convict Abel Magwitch (Finlay Currie). The latter, a rough-looking man of almost gentle dignity - and both a 'parent' and a 'brother' to Pip - has redeemed himself by becoming a successful pastoralist 'down under'. Accordingly, the ex-blacksmith Pip, now passing as a gentleman, finds that he must forgo snobbery and, in the rest of the film, begin to accept his common humanity, i.e. acknowledge the bond he shares with this man. In other words, he must acknowledge that his sexual and class infatuations have blinded him. (Leonard Leff reports that a reason Hitchcock was attracted to 'The Paradine Case' was that it offered him the prospect of filming in Dickensian locales, precisely as seen in a film like **Great Expectations**.)

And when you look at the inn scene in the novel of 'The Paradine Case', here's what you find:

> Keane felt rather like a witness 'cornered' in cross-examination; yet, strangely perhaps, he did not resent the extraordinary line Marsh was taking [in proposing a swapping of information]. Afterwards he wondered why he had not done so, and found the explanation in the under things which abolish at moments the class differences, and indeed all the surface differences between man and man, and force men, often against their wills, into a brotherhood that seems to be the deliberate work of destiny. (Chapter XXV)

* * *

Nobody in **The Paradine Case** has a monopoly of right, or of anything else. Latour is nominally a villain, like Rico Parra in **Topaz**. He might almost equally be seen as a hero, or at least as a man terribly wronged, like Father Logan (Montgomery Clift) in **I Confess**, with whom he shares much in common (e.g. heroic war service; subsequent willingness to sacrifice everything to serve his 'Master'). Nor need Latour's impassioned description of Mrs Paradine as 'bad to the bone' be taken as the final word on that particular topic ... It's true, of course, that in the end Mrs Paradine is found guilty of murdering her husband, and is painted as being the veritable serpent in the Garden of Eden. Yet at least three men have contributed, if inadvertently, to her downfall. Keane is one, and Mrs Paradine rebukes him in Court for his vindictiveness towards Latour. (In fact, Keane's 'cruelty' will prove doubly fatal.) Another is the late Colonel Paradine himself, a man prone to outbursts of violent temper dating from the time he was blinded in the War. And there's Latour, the handsome celibate. If he himself hasn't 'wallowed in the mud', what temptation has he laid in the way of Mrs Paradine? She whose husband was almost certainly sexually dysfunctional as well as violent?[13] In truth, despite the elderly Sir Simon's calling her a woman of 'rather easy virtue' - probably referring to the time before she met the Colonel - it looks as if her marriage had been remarkably forbearing. (The theme of a married woman unable to shed the stigma of her errant past wasn't a new one for Hitchcock. His 1926 film actually called **Easy Virtue** is the prototype.) In any event, Mrs Paradine's admission in Court of the love she feels for Latour isn't just heartfelt - it's made in the knowledge that it may convict her of the capital crime of murder.[14]

* * *

Despite the fragmented appearance of London during the film, there's a countervailing tendency at work. Significantly, it's provided by the film itself - which seems to take the 'old-fashioned' view that Art, by showing the 'under things', can evoke a compassion that brings Paradise a step or so closer. On the evening after the first day of the trial, Hitchcock effectively sums up matters in three linked images. First, we see a complacent Lord Horfield at home, puffing an after-dinner cigar and sipping brandy,

watched by an obviously concerned Lady Horfield (Ethel Barrymore). Then we see a darkened cell where Mrs Paradine is lying awake, watched by a wardress; and finally, Gay's bedroom where she, too, lies awake, although she pretends to be asleep when her husband looks in at her. Now, I think there's indeed a basic unity to this triptych of images - but it consists of none of the obvious things (e.g. of people watching). It's much closer, in fact, to that Dickensian 'whole' that I noted in 'MacGuffin' 6, something that Manny (Henry Fonda) in **The Wrong Man** can't grasp - a purely noumenal reality.

Regular 'MacGuffin' readers may have noticed that, like Mrs Paradine, I've been forbearing in this article - I've not yet referred to the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), whose generally cosmopolitan outlook seems to me to anticipate Hitchcock's. The fact is, though, that the Hichens novel specifically mentions 'the great Schopenhauer' (Chapter XL), and shows his influence. Indeed, there's at least one episode, and one scene, that needs a knowledge of his thought if it's to be fully understood. The theme of that scene is the need for compassion.

Once again Lord Horfield sits at home with Lady Horfield. The trial proper has ended, and only the verdict and the sentence have still to be given. In Court, Lord Horfield has managed the 'over-emotional' Keane with the utmost facility, and indeed has been the very model of one of His Majesty's judges. Perhaps that explains a feature of the décor in the Judge's home: its 'neo-classical' panelling, like that in the courtroom, the scene of his triumphs. But, ironically, the panelling also resembles Hindley Hall's. The notion of a Dickensian 'whole' again seems posited. In the above-mentioned article on **The Wrong Man** ('MacGuffin' 6), I likened that film to 'Bleak House', mainly because it, too, is a tale of institutional injustice. Now I'm again reminded of the novel. Its title specifies not just a particular English country house, and another even 'bleaker' version of it (called 'Chesney Wold'), but also a law court (the Court of Chancery) and, beyond that, the English nation.

Lord Horfield has his own apparently inflexible thoughts about the judicial system, thoughts which he's graciously prepared to share with his wife. But first, this being dinner-time, he'll crack a walnut and remark dispassionately on how its contents resemble 'the human brain'. (The business of the walnut isn't in the novel, by the way.) Whether or not Lady Horfield notices the **truly** monstrous image of her husband this simile suggests, she immediately refers to the trial. She'll pray, she says, that the verdict will be 'Not Guilty', because 'who needs pity more than a woman who has sinned?' Her husband sniffs.

But, just for once, Lady Horfield is adamant. This is her big scene. As Selznick's script here follows the novel fairly closely, it seems fair to quote the latter:

> "Punishment is part of the scheme," said her husband. "And an extremely necessary part of it."
> "But doesn't life punish us enough, doesn't it, Horfield? Why should we hurt each other? We have no right to be cruel. If I am certain of anything, I am certain of that."
> Suddenly, with an awkward, even startling movement, she stretched forward over the dining-table, knocking over a glass as she did so.
> "Horfield, my dear - don't be cruel any more!" she said in a trembling voice. "Give it up! You may think it makes you happy, but you're wrong. It doesn't! It can't! It's - it's an illusion!" (Chapter XXXIX)

Perhaps the knocked-over glass may remind us of the glass of burgundy that had killed Colonel Paradine - another 'cruel' man who had been greatly honoured by his country. Or perhaps the accident is just one more instance of worldly imperfection. Either way, it's apt. Lady Horfield's point that her husband's cruelty doesn't make him happy is correct, firstly, because that cruelty makes her - and their marriage - **un**happy. But, secondly, because the 'illusion' she refers to is basic - the idea is as old as Euripides and nowhere more cogently expressed than in Schopenhauer's distinction between **temporal** and **eternal** justice. The latter's the real 'judge' in **The Paradine Case**. Quite simply, even the person who's happy for a time, 'amid the sufferings of innumerable others', as Schopenhauer says, must eventually awake, 'in order to realize that only a fleeting illusion has separated him from the suffering of his life'. Or, if he fails to so awake, then in a sense enlightenment and justice are deferred, but really 'tormentor and tormented are one'. And that's what Lady Horfield wants the Judge to see.

A similar idea informs **Vertigo**, as I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 1. There, the film's nominal villain,

Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore), eludes temporal justice but the film's strong sense of **eternal** justice makes its own comment. Likewise, **The Paradine Case** stresses 'under things', as during the inn scene (where a further function of the wind may be to imply the levelling 'Will' that pervades all of Nature). Only one's knowledge of the sickening killing of the 250 Iceland sheep, as mentioned earlier, mars the film's delivery of its message (and the novel's) - fortunately, I think the later **Marnie** (1964) shows a greater maturity in this respect.

Lady Horfield keeps plugging away. Noting the Judge's total resistance to what she says, she adds: 'Oh Tommy, when you were young you were kind.' The parallel with Keane's 'lost ideals' may leave you feeling that there's something almost murderous about the egoism of these men of temporal justice, or at any rate about the 'scheme' that binds them. But His Lordship is in no mood to discuss such things tonight. Framed by burning candles, suggesting Lucifer in his domain, he announces: 'The Paradine woman will be hanged after three clear Sundays.'

The final scene follows immediately, and takes place towards dawn at Sir Simon's house. The theme of mercy having just been well and truly sounded by Lady Horfield - and **not** absolutely put out of Court by the Judge's hostility to it - what's now needed is a pragmatic note. It's provided in turn by Sir Simon and by Gay. First, Sir Simon tells Keane that the latter's thought of giving up the Bar is 'poppycock'. Then, in some of Hitchcock's economical-as-ever camerawork (executed in this film by the famous Lee Garmes), we see Judith call her father from the room. A worried Gay has turned up. With a wonderful little speech, Gay puts behind her all last traces of over-fastidiousness, and asks her erring husband not to be 'a beachcomber'. She wants him, rather, 'back on the job'. With subjective camera, Hitchcock now puts us **doubly** inside the marriage, something we never got with the Horfields (or with the Paradines). That is, he cuts directly between husband and wife as Gay says, 'Incidentally, darling, you do need a shave', and her hand reaches out from the camera lens to feel his stubble. It's a fairly explicit sexual symbol, at last ...

Gay's cautionary remark about beachcombing anticipates the equally cautionary line in **Psycho** about running away and setting up 'a private island'. It doesn't, or won't, do. As noted, Hitchcock's films are full of premature or misguided attempts to resolve unhappiness in exotic or isolated places. Such attempts never succeed in Hitchcock (with the possible exception of the comedy **The Trouble With Harry** - which is its **own** 'pastorale'). This, for perfectly unsentimental reasons. There's no going back to the womb. As they say, ontogenesis echoes phylogenesis (cf. the 'evolution' motif in **The Wrong Man**), and the problem needs to be seen accordingly. Yet the truth always lies close at hand.[15] Perhaps that's why 'Paradine' is only one letter removed from 'Paradise'. And why, like Lady Horfield, we should keep plugging away.

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Notes

1. Lines heard echoing past a row of prison cells in **The Paradine Case**. William Douglas's popular song evidently didn't achieve its author's purpose, for the real Annie married Douglas's rival, Alexander Fergusson.

2. In Welles's **The Lady from Shanghai** (1946), Macao is called 'the wickedest city in the world'.

3. In the opening scene, Mrs Paradine checks her unruffled appearance in a gilt-framed mirror. Alongside, though, is a large screen on which is painted in modernist style a picture of rearing horses. The two images, so different, are nevertheless in apposition. (Later we learn that Mrs Paradine rode a black hunter.)

4. Jack the Ripper's diary, recently 'discovered', purports to show that James Maybrick and Jack the Ripper were the same person!

5. Julian Symons, 'Crime and Detection: An illustrated history from 1840' (1968), p. 123.

6. Relaxing after dinner, Horfield calls Sir Simon Flaquer 'Simmy' and asks not to be interrupted by him 'in the middle of an insult'. (Rather more of a Mr Justice Avory look-alike, by the way, is the epicene judge in **I Confess**.)

7. That is, in both films the man is working to save the woman but with a self-interested motive as well. Keane, described in the novel as still 'boyish', seems to identify the Italian-born Mrs Paradine with the wild oats he never sowed.

8. Daphne du Maurier set the 'Rebecca' novel in her beloved Cornwall - the legendary birthplace of King Arthur (at Tintagel).

9. Both films end with characters returning to their respective native countries. The Australia of **Under Capricorn**, constantly photographed in fiery reds, represents a virtual purgatory (as opposed to Ireland, where Lady Hattie had been accustomed to ride at a fence 'as if the Kingdom of Heaven were on the other side').

10. As Robin Wood has noted, Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' provided the very title of an early draft of **Vertigo**. The relevant lines are: 'Darkling I listen; and for many a time/ I have been half in love with easeful Death'. For my thoughts on the ambiguity of the Muir Woods scene in **Vertigo**, see 'MacGuffin' 11.

11. This strongly suggests Latour's celibacy. Smoking has sexual connotations throughout the film. Two signs of Gay's losing her over-fastidiousness are her electing to attend a murder trial (a 'first' for her) and her taking up smoking ...

12. Given criticism about the unsuitability of Gregory Peck (b. 1916) to play an English barrister, and the unavailability of Laurence Olivier (b. 1907) - he and wife Vivien Leigh were touring Australia - I think John Mills (b. 1908) could have been an excellent choice to play Keane in Hitchcock's film.

13. Blindness often has some such sexual connotation in films, of course.

14. Did Mrs Paradine's seduction of the celibate (and virginal?) Latour represent no more, and no less, than an attempted 'lesson in love' that went terribly wrong? Perhaps the most ambiguous lines in the film are Keane's question to Mrs Paradine in Court, 'Did he [Latour] try to make love to you?', and her answer, 'Yes'. Cf. the situation of Juanita Cordoba and the impotent Rico Parra in **Topaz** (as noted in 'Book Review' in this issue).

15. I have noted in some previous 'MacGuffins' (e.g. no. 10) the lines from Emerson that inform **Marnie**: 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man'.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Hitchcock's **Young and Innocent**; Spielberg's **Schindler's List**; book reviews (e.g. 'Soul in Suspense', 'Colin Wilson's World Famous Murders', 'The Monstrous-Feminine'). Plus the usual features, including 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted.

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Film scripts, anyone?

Many of Hitchcock's films are available in their original screenplay form, and these sometimes contain information and material not included in the finished film. A reliable supplier is 'Hollywood Scripts', whose US address is: 5514 Satsuma Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91601; telephone 818-980-3545.

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BACK-ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA are $4 each.

Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Vertigo** (no. 11), Adrian Martin on **Notorious** (10), Evan Williams on **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). Earlier, there were issues on **Suspicion** (7), **The Wrong Man** plus Charles Barr on Hitchcock's British Period (6), **Number 17** (5), **Psycho** (4), **The Lodger** (3), **Stage Fright** (2), and **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** (1). (The recent issues are the ones most recommended!) The next 'MacGuffin' will include a detailed Table of Contents for issues 9-12.

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ODD SPOT: NO HARD FEELINGS

John Ford's 1937 film **Wee Willie Winkie** (of which there's an echo - literally - in Alfred Hitchcock's 1939 **Jamaica Inn**) starred a 9-years-old Shirley Temple, and was reviewed by Graham Greene in the 28th October, 1937, edition of the British weekly, 'Night and Day', which ceased publication soon afterwards.

The reason that 'Night and Day' folded was, of course, that Greene's review had been deemed libellous by a British court, which awarded heavy damages against the journal to Miss Temple and Twentieth-Century Fox. Greene had referred virulently to the pre-pubescent Shirley as a 'fancy little piece ... with the mature suggestiveness of a Dietrich: her neat and well developed rump twisted in the tap-dance ...'.

Strange to relate, then, it appears that Shirley herself bore Greene no malice. As Christopher Hawtree (who edited a 'Night and Day' anthology a few years ago) has now shown, the two became friends. Shirley was eventually appointed US Ambassador in Prague, where Greene had occasion to write to her in 1990. His letters were signed 'affectionately', her reply referred to him as 'colleague of many years' and promised a party.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 13 August 1994 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5 £3

EDITORIAL

Until Britain's King Edward VIII abdicated his throne on December 12, 1936, because he wished to marry a divorced American woman, a commoner, his country had been bitterly divided over the matter. Even now, there are signs that the underlying divisions have not fully healed or gone away ...

Well, Hitchcock's **Young and Innocent** came out in 1937. It makes no direct reference to the so-called Abdication Crisis, something that no doubt only helped it appeal the more to audiences of the time. Yet, watching it now, you may sense that it touches on related topics, as if by design. For example, the question of divorce is raised in the (literally stormy) opening scene, only to be dropped from all of the (consistently sunny) scenes that follow.

More crucially, the film's young couple, Robert and Erica, are commoners who nevertheless have about them a good deal of grace and virtue. (That isn't to call either of them 'innocent', Robert especially.) Robert is a promising writer of movie scripts, whose impression of America must surely be favourable since he has already sold a script to Hollywood! Also, with his courteous voice and bearing, he may remind you of the present-day Prince Charles (grandson, let's notice, of Edward VIII's brother, who came to the throne as George VI).

Likewise, to critic Penelope Gilliatt Erica seems to resemble one of novelist Dornford Yates's courtly heroines, with 'great grey eyes'. Yet she keeps the common touch, not least in her attachment to her battered old car and to her mongrel dog, Towser. An article on **Young and Innocent** in this 'MacGuffin' suggests that ultimately what the film does is confer on its audience a kind of 'higher innocence' ...

I have to tell you that this 'MacGuffin' has its eccentric moments, or worse. (Honesty is the best policy!) A case in point is the review of a very readable new book about pop culture, 'Phantasms', by local writer Adrian Martin. As Adrian isn't exactly unknown to 'MacGuffin' readers, I apologise to both him and them for the idiosyncratic (or at any rate, 'personal') tack the review takes! There's also this time a review by film lecturer and critic Tom Ryan of a new 'international history' of film; and a review of the recently-published continuity script of Hitchcock's **North by Northwest**, edited by the prolific James Naremore.

We're considerably pushed for room in this issue. To save face, er space, the sizable 'Bloopers' feature has been held over; as has the Table of Contents for issues 9-12.

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. Also to save space, there's no 'Coming Attractions' listing this time. But I can report that some pleasant surprises are in store. And among the Hitchcock films for special attention soon are **The Ring**, **Foreign Correspondent** and **Spellbound**.

LETTERS

Timothy Walters, Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA

Your review of the Theodore Price book [in 'MacGuffin' 12] was an intelligent discourse on homosexual characters in the films of Hitchcock. However, I noticed no mention of the morose Leonard from **North by Northwest**.

Leonard (Martin Landau) is the devoted henchman and 'right arm' of the traitorous Vandamm (James Mason). Sinister and gaunt, Leonard is a menacing and effective screen villain who exudes a callous evil. He also emanates a rather effeminate persona. He addresses Vandamm with a curt 'sir' that suggests a servant who is loyal in more than one sense.

In the climactic Rapid City sequence, Leonard attempts to convince Vandamm that Eve (Eva Marie Saint) is actually a treacherous female who has betrayed them. When Vandamm reacts skeptically, Leonard alludes to his 'women's intuition'. This is analogous with the pervasive 1950s stereotype that gay couples each assume a man and woman role . At one point Vandamm says to Leonard, 'I think you're jealous. I'm very touched.'

Leonard turns out to be correct in his distrust of Eve, so jealousy was obviously not his sole motive. Yet the film creates the vague impression that Leonard is a homosexual concubine and Vandamm his bisexual master. I have always found this to be a provocative implication for a film released in ultraconservative 1959, an era when homosexuality was largely suppressed and unacknowledged by society.

(Editor's note. Yes indeed. And yet, what you describe is virtually a rerun of **Rebecca**, with Vandamm as the 'polymorphous perverse' Rebecca, Leonard as the devoted/jealous Mrs Danvers - and Thornhill as the straight-laced Maxim. Ironically, Cary Grant in real life was bisexual, as, of course, was the actor who had played Maxim, Laurence Olivier.)

* * *

Melanie Whiting, Mallala, South Australia.

In October we were fortunate enough to visit Hollywood and do the Universal Studios tour. As part of the tour, we visited a demonstration of Hitch's special effects. I was the first to put up my hand to volunteer to take part. The particular movie being illustrated was **Saboteur**, and the special effect was 'falling'. My experience that day made our trip extra special. I recommend the tour to anyone. 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' is still shown on TV over there.

* * *

Tim Costello, Cronulla, New South Wales, Australia.

Just thought I'd write out a 'top ten Hitchcocks' to let you know my tastes at this point. 1. **Shadow of a Doubt**. 2. **Vertigo**. 3. **North by Northwest**. 4. **The 39 Steps**. 5. **Stage Fright**. 6. **Strangers on a Train**. 7. **The Lady Vanishes**. 8. **The Paradine Case**. 9. **Rear Window**. 10. **Psycho**.

Probably no surprises there, except for **Stage Fright** which seems terribly underrated generally - it's easily the funniest film (Alistair Sim in particular) and does have great suspense.

* * *

Richard Kincaid, Bozeman, Montana, USA.

I really appreciate the ['MacGuffin's'] intelligent yet jargon free film criticism.

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Everything you always wanted to know about ... Dr Zizek

His photograph may remind you of the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder, being of an unshaven chap in a denim jacket. The photograph was published when he visited Australia recently to address psychoanalysts on how popular culture reflects society 'in its basic logic'.

Dr Slavoj Zizek, a senior researcher with the University of Ljubljana's Institute for Sociology, is the author of such books as 'Enjoy Your Symptom' and the catchily-titled 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)'.

Dr Zizek told his audiences that trends in contemporary popular culture allow us to detect fundamental shifts in how we see ourselves. For instance, Robert Altman's latest film, **Short Cuts**, based on the works of Raymond Carver, gives an insight into post-modern subjectivity.

'What Altman has done is portray an almost blissful vision of parallel stories, parallel lives which interconnect but in a totally contingent way.

'So I think it's wrong to view the movie as pessimistic, as an example of universe despair. It's really beyond pessimism or optimism, and it breaks out of the classic Hollywood formula.'

More about Hitchcock's wartime propaganda films

When Hitchcock's **Bon Voyage** and **Aventure Malgache** were screened in Los Angeles recently, **Kevin Thomas of the 'Los Angeles Times'** wrote an appreciative report. He notes that the films, each about thirty minutes long, were commissioned in 1944 by the British Ministry of Information for showing in Occupied France to Resistance fighters there. Both films have lately been given English subtitles prepared by author and [redacted]

Thomas calls the films 'subtle, intricate, carefully detailed film noir, models of compression and resourcefulness' which 'clearly show the work of Hitchcock at his prime, coming as they do between **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Spellbound**'.

Bon Voyage sounds particularly intriguing. A young Scottish RAF gunner (British actor John Blythe), who has escaped from a POW camp in Germany, makes his way to London where he's interviewed by a Free French officer. In flashback, the gunner, Sgt Dougal, who's amusingly always hungry, tells how he was helped by another escapee, a Pole, and made his way through France with the help of the Resistance.

When the interviewing officer tells Sgt Dougal that the Pole was really a Vichy spy out to uncover as many members of the Resistance as possible, this triggers a rerun, in flashback, of the sergeant's [redacted] takes on a whole new meaning, with many subtle details revealed.

The other film, **Aventure Malgache**, never made it to France. Thomas suggests this was because it somehow manages to show the French people in an ambiguous light 'surely not equalled until Marcel Ophuls's 1970 documentary **The Sorrow and the Pity**'.

Both films, though, have now been released overseas on video.

New books

Recent lists sent to us by the Electric Shadows Bookshop in Canberra include a couple of Hitchcock-related titles. They are: Robert Corber, 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock,

Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (260pp, pb); and Edgardo Cozarinsky (ed.), 'Borges In and On Film' (117pp, pb), containing Borges's collected criticism of such films as Ford's **The Informer**, Hitchcock's **Sabotage**, and Mayo's **The Petrified Forest**.

Another recent title of interest is E. Ann Kaplan, 'Motherhood and Representation: the Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama' (250pp, pb). The author looks at how motherhood has been depicted in novels and films from 1830 to the present, including Ellen Wood's 'East Lynne' and Hitchcock's **Marnie**.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Sklar, Robert: 'Film: An International History of the Medium (Thames & Hudson, 1994).

Reviewed by Tom Ryan

Robert Sklar's handsome 560-page tome on the history of film respectfully observes that by the 1960s Sir Alfred Hitchcock had become one of the cinema's 'ranking elders'. Alas, scholarly books like this aren't supposed to be controversial, and so one doesn't expect to find Sklar giving Hitch the kind of going over he gets in 'Movieline' columnist Joe Queenan's recently-published 'If You're Talking To Me Your Career Must Be In Trouble'.

I'll just note in passing, then, that anyone interested in Hitchcock is more likely to discover food for thought in Queenan's irreverent foragings (which I mention here only because I've just happened upon them) than in Sklar's book.

It's definitely not scholarship when the maverick Queenan claims that at the end of **Vertigo** (1958) Scottie's anguished outburst against Judy/Madeleine is Hitchcock's displaced anger at Grace Kelly's desertion of him for Prince Rainier. 'He made you over just like I made you over, only better ...', etc. But it is provocative muck-raking that isn't easily dispensed with, whether or not it finally helps you understand Hitchcock's masterpiece.

As for Sklar, the author of the illuminating 'Movie-Made America' (1975), a contributing editor to the enduring left-wing American film quarterly, 'Cineaste', and currently Professor of Film Studies at New York University, such musings aren't on the menu. As a scholar, albeit one writing a coffee-table history of the cinema, he is interested in Hitchcock only as a filmmaker and an artist. Parameters which I share, by the way.

Hitchcock aside, his 'International History' is cram-packed with statistics. Did you know, for example, that 'the video sales for Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** were higher than the net profits from theatrical box office returns of any film in history'? Or that 'in the 1980s India produced by far the largest number of films of any country - nearly one thousand annually'? Or that 'twenty-three features were released by Hollywood studios in 1953 in 3-D ... [that] in 1954, the number of releases was thirteen ... [that] in 1955 the total was exactly one, and in 1956 - zero'?

But they're not just statistics in a vacuum. Sklar provides them with a context you can get your teeth into. And, for him, the celluloid past is best understood at the intersection of artistic aspiration and political and economic circumstance. He's certainly provocative, but in a much more substantial and challenging way than Queenan.

Selectively tracing the development of film as an international medium, he ranges across more than a century of technological innovation, commercial opportunism, social change and aesthetic ingenuity. For him, film is an art, but it is also an industry, subject to the same forces as other industries. His capsule comments about particular films and filmmakers are those of an insightful critic, although the major strength of his approach is his recognition that any study of film as an international phenomenon needs to go much further.

He admires the same areas of Hollywood filmmaking as I do (not the only reason he's insightful). But he

also insists we recognise that Hollywood's domination of world cinema has nothing to do with the quality of its output, and everything to do with the emergence of the US in the twentieth century as a capitalist nation with global aspirations. To be commercially viable, a film has to be exhibited, and the larger the market that can be created for it the better.

Of course, Sklar's base in the US means that he is writing from an American vantage point. He includes some very useful introductory chapters on the struggle to establish national cinemas within various Asian, African and South American countries (or colonies). But his account of the past pivots on the entrenched landmarks that he grew up with: American cinema (Ford, Hawks, the later Hitchcock, et al.), French, German, Italian, Russian. And he is certainly not alone in this.

Moreover, any attempt to cover a century of international filmmaking within a single volume is inevitably going to be fraught with problems: of access and of selection. Many films have simply vanished. For example, of those made during the silent era, only a small percentage has survived the ravages of time. Others remain out of the reach of any single historian. And, from the thousands of films made each year around the world, Sklar's extraction of 'more than eleven hundred' is necessarily going to have its limitations.

However, as he points out in his introduction, and here his method wisely diverges from the one employed by most film historians, he is not pretending to be comprehensive, or objective: 'A history of cinema differs from a dictionary or an encyclopedia in its capacity to make connections.' However incomplete it might be, his is primarily a cultural overview whose focus happens to be film.

Sklar is constantly reminding us that there's always more to be known. He concludes his survey with the observation that 'history is never finished, and rarely stays the same way for long'. His contribution is that, despite the constraints (not the least of which is space), 'Film: An International History of the Medium' still manages to offer an informed view of the Big Picture. It is beautifully designed and gloriously illustrated, and the vast range of colour and black and white stills are (for once) captioned with a purpose.

[Tom Ryan is film critic for 'The Sunday Age', where a slightly shorter version of this review appeared. Our version is printed with permission.]

Martin, Adrian: 'Phantasms: The dreams and desires at the heart of our popular culture' (McPhee Gribble/ Penguin Books: Ringwood, Australia, 1994; 212 pp, pb).

> **In Bed With Madonna** [aka **Truth or Dare**, 1991] is a typically unruly, confused, contradictory, excessive pop artefact, and you'll only ever make sense of it and your own response to it by plunging in, armed with any theoretical tool that may or may not prove useful.
>
> - Adrian Martin, 'Phantasms' (p. 31)

Adrian Martin is a professional elucidator of film and media - one whose comments are particularly lucid. Just recall his account of Hitchcock's **Notorious** (1946) in 'MacGuffin' 10, describing the 'enigmatic logic' of the relationship between the three main characters. I've read whole chapters in books on Hitchcock that have shown far less understanding. Well, now Adrian has sent us a review-copy of his own book, 'Phantasms', and its subject proves to be virtually every aspect of pop culture consumed in Australia circa 1991-1993. The book contains twenty-five short essays; unfortunately, I'll only be able to mention a few here. Also, for various reasons, I fear that my review will risk sounding slightly stuffy ...

Consider this. Almost at the outset Adrian shows that he hasn't overlooked one of the incidental lessons of Hitchcock. 'We do well to remember', he says in a Prologue, 'that ... Hitchcock ... was considered, not very long ago, a vulgar Hollywood entertainer whose presence in anything resembling high culture had to be tenaciously justified.' (p. 5) From this, he extrapolates that we shouldn't now dismiss as worthless even 'trash culture' - which is a neat analogy on Adrian's part, even if it rather blurs the fact that Hitchcock himself was never considered trashy: or why would David Selznick, producer of the

Notorious package, have employed him? I hasten to add that Adrian here cites Hitchcock as a representative of 'popular' culture, **not** trash; nevertheless, the possibility of a logical slide has been opened up. Reading further in the book, we had better be alert!

For instance, we soon come to the essay called 'Perish the Thought: Intellectualising Pop'. For me, it contains another type of slide: a sliding past (or over). I'm thinking of when the essay, albeit with some evident amusement, quotes without direct comment an article by two Australian critics praising **In Bed With Madonna** for '"destabilising the central position given to truth in conceptions of documentary"' (p. 26). I acknowledge the 'postmodernist' tone of that remark, but my point concerns how Adrian's essay dodges the implication (or assumption) of it, in preference to chastising certain 'mass media intellectuals' seemingly left floundering by the new pop ways.

I say 'seemingly' because I think there's an alternative explanation which Adrian overlooks, and which I'll come to. First, though, let me stress my main point: namely, that the book doesn't indicate where it stands in relation to 'documentary truth' and its relation to pop culture. For me, such truth exists, and is very precious. I think it refers, often, to what is **most** widely or deeply or lastingly fixed in general experience, i.e. not just the pop scene (as usually defined). A recent documentary, 'When the War Came to Australia', showing life on the home front during the Second World War, is very competently assembled - yet its capacity to affect a viewer has more to do with how, time and again, it directly illuminates that viewer's own (shared) life and history. Here's a slightly different example. For an Australian viewer, the excellence of 'The [American] Civil War' concerns its broad human truths, which shock or move us deeply. But I think both programmes are basic in a way that **In Bed With Madonna** isn't (sharing and shocking though **it** may be, after its fashion).

Well, Adrian advocates plunging in regardless. But why, exactly? Because Madonna is 'big' at the moment? Because someone may happen to nominate Alek Keshishian's film in a 'ten best' list? Personally, I think I would just rather read Adrian's (and one or two other commentators') expert opinions about the film - especially now I've seen it! And that's not meant as a criticism of the film, because it too is very competently made. Rather, I want to claim that if you're prepared to defy current wisdom, and admit that some truths **are** more basic than others - as I've tried to indicate above - then much else follows. For instance, you can be more detached. In turn, detachment may bring a certain wisdom of its own ...

Here's a rough analogy. In popular Hinduism there are hundreds of gods and goddesses, each with its own cult. The point is, you're not expected to worship - or even know about - any but the major deities and perhaps one or two of the lesser ones, in order to be a devout, practising Hindu. Now let's return to Madonna. I'm not sure if she's a major goddess, but anyone can tell that her principal appeal is sexual, allied to the fact that she has conspicuously sloughed off her Catholic upbringing. And it seems to me that nearly everything else follows from that: e.g. her public humiliation of her father, and the even greater adoration such an act brings her - including, apparently, from her father himself. Still, as Adrian reminds us (p. 31), Madonna is also the epitome of pop culture's tendency to change its own image, so who knows what she'll do next? But, in that case, I think I'll just let Adrian tell me.

You may be surprised to hear how there are signs that Adrian himself is moving towards a degree of detachment. (But if pop is as chameleon-like as he says, perhaps you shouldn't be.) In his Prologue (p. 3) he cites the expatriate Chilean filmmaker Raul Ruiz on how it may be better to watch and really think about just five films a year than to 'bullishly' see each new film in order to have an opinion about it. In turn, you may then be better able to isolate and track your own obsessions and thereby '"escape from yourself"'. (Anyone who has ever meditated, or has kept a dream-diary, will recognise that technique.)

On the other hand, if we look at where Adrian is coming from, rather than where he may be headed, it's certainly not surprising that he has never had much truck with mythologist Joseph Campbell - even after encountering his work in a six-part TV series shown in Australia last year. In the essay 'Heroes, Quests and the Meaning of Life: Mythomania', Adrian is leery of several filmmakers, such as Australia's George Miller, Yahoo Serious and Geoffrey Wright, who have each promoted one or other of their films by saying they embody a universal myth. (A sure sign of the director having been less than fully engaged creatively, I'd have thought.) But the crux of the essay may be the humorous passage where Adrian recalls discussion-panels on which someone has adduced a Jungian- or Campbell-type myth in order to

'explain' a particular film: at that point, 'everyone nods thoughtfully and then scurries away, visibly relieved at having to think no further.' (p. 126) That description merits a chuckle - but again might be said to slide past an important issue: namely, how there could indeed be some simple life-truths that frequently elude pop culture and its commentators.

At the risk (as I say) of sounding stuffy, I want to raise the matter of suffering. From Jung's reading of Schopenhauer, and his own early observations of the natural world, he saw that suffering is basic. That is, he reached exactly the same conclusion as Hitchcock did at the time of making **The Birds** (1963): 'catastrophe ... surrounds us all'. Well. it's also there every night on TV if you look for it, in news bulletins and in truth-based documentaries - such as the one on Channel 28 recently, about child-labour around the world, which quoted the staggering statistic that 200 million children are forced to work each day. And yet, almost the only contact the pop scene (as usually defined) will have with any of this is when, for one or two admirable nights, a concert is held to raise funds for famine-relief or the like. Otherwise, there'll just be some 'neat' or 'spectacular' use of images of drought or flood or a collapsing building in a rock video.

Now, I really don't want to be thought a party pooper (like those mythologising panelists!). So I'll quickly note a key essay of Adrian's in which he evinces concern for the suffering people he calls 'the walking wounded' (cf p. 130). The essay is titled 'The Everlasting Functional Dysfunctional Family', and it deals mainly with sitcoms like 'Roseanne'. (Adrian thinks the latter is 'one of the best shows on TV' - p. 74; for my part, I certainly consider the lady in question one of TV's most **real** people.) At one point, Adrian quotes the actor/director John Cassavetes, playing a rather frazzled divorcee-parent in his film **Love Streams** (1984). Matter-of-factly, Cassavetes remarks, 'Life is a series of suicides, promises broken, children smashed, whatever.' (p. 74) Not only does Adrian care to quote that doleful line, for which he deserves credit, he springboards from it into the forceful observation that some media depictions of so-called 'dysfunctional' families are really showing us new, unorthodox, yet above all **effective** ways out of the impasse of problematic relationships - and suffering.

Yet I still hold to how there's a place for a more detached approach to the media than, by and large, Adrian allows. There's a hit-and-miss aspect to his 'plunging in' approach. If you go that way, you may never identify the whole picture and simply be buffeted into a too-common (if Australian?) wry tolerance that's at once heroic and sad. Well, for over a decade, I sat at the feet of Shri Vijayadev Yogendra, from India. He taught us meditation and the wisdom of the golden mean (and worried, I learned eventually, that my exposure to media-studies was undermining the effect on me of his teaching). Years later, I still think that meditation or some equivalent (e.g. keeping a dream-diary) can lead to a knowledge on your own account of what Adrian calls 'phantasms'. With this important difference: being centred in the individual self, phantasms born of meditation have the potential to reach deeper and eventually free that self. Whereupon, the whole picture should indeed become clear.

A point of clarification. We tend to forget that the media are what their name says: as intermediaries, or go-betweens, they interpose between us and reality. For that reason, we don't always need them, or even media commentators, in order to see plainly what is happening. To the extent that Adrian's essay called 'Find Yourself a City' moves beyond describing various city-based movies, and talks about the metropolis itself, it becomes obvious (e.g. in telling us that cities have always been places for visionaries to work upon, or from - p. 47). Mind you, the descriptions of the films are often beautifully done; they bind their own spells on the reader. Nevertheless, the essay is one of the book's shallower 'meditations'. Better to 'do it yourself'?

A theme of this review has been how we should stand back to see the wider picture as often as we jump right in. Adrian expresses the same idea when he criticises some lop-sided commentaries on the image of the city in films (p. 45). But perhaps he isn't immune from lop-sidedness himself! Earlier, I implied that not all 'mass media intellectuals' are as obtuse as Adrian paints them. If some of them (e.g. Phillip Adams of 'The Australian' and Radio National) don't always 'plunge in' gleefully when confronted with **In Bed With Madonna** or even the much greater work **Taxi Driver** (Martin Scorsese, 1976) - both of which are films that Adams has expressed vehement reservations about - then the reason may concern nothing less than the perennial issue of where art stands in your ideal republic (or biosphere) - and who and what else matters. I find Adams to be, on balance, the most level-headed and best-informed of Australia's public commentators; with his above-average knowledge of films, he is usually able to quickly

'savvy' what an **In Bed With Madonna** is about (in ways I've indicated) before he then decides whether or not he wants to **savour** it further. Now, an interesting thing about these two films is that they're both, at some level, about the inherited Catholic sensibility - and frequently these days, rage. Arguably, Adams felt no urge to respond to the 'necessity' of their making, whereas that's very much what Adrian did do. Probably the most passionate essay in his book is about Scorsese's 'secret' purpose: its title is 'Martin Scorsese's Indirect Aim'. Like the Madonna essay, it welcomes the **in extremis** experience. But finally neither piece convinces me.

But, hey, there's a great deal to enjoy in this book. If you're a film or media buff, it constantly offers the delights of recognition. And Adrian's quality of writing - second to none in his field - affords handsome bonuses. Here's the sort of thing I mean. The title of one essay tells us to 'Send in the Ghosts' - it's about ghost movies. But don't you hear an echo of Stephen Sondheim? The same essay proceeds to inform us that a reincarnation story like **Chances Are** (1989) belongs to 'a sub-genre that is a kissing cousin to the ghost story' (p. 21). How about that unexpected Elvis reference? As for Joe Dante's gremlins tearing up a cinema showing **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, or Pee-wee Herman riding his beloved bicycle, or the sinister music teacher Dr T working out his '5000 fingers' (500 captive children at pianos) - 'these', says Adrian, 'are a few of my favourite myths'(p. 129). So he happily evokes the sound of Julie Andrews for good measure! But then, you almost suspect that this author never forgets **anything** he's seen on some screen or other ...

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Naremore, James (ed.): 'North by Northwest' (Rutgers Films in Print: Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1993; 238 pp, pb).

My copy of Eric Ambler's 1939 thriller 'The Mask of Dimitrios' (aka 'A Coffin for Dimitrios') carries an endorsement by Alfred Hitchcock on its cover, calling it 'An amazing novel'. Thanks to Professor Naremore's **North by Northwest** book, I now know where the Hitchcock quote comes from. When Hitchcock first arrived in America, David Selznick attempted to bring him and the London-born novelist together. In 1942 Hitchcock wrote the introduction to an omnibus of Ambler's fiction called 'Intrigue'. (Later, in 1958, Ambler married Hitchcock's long-time associate, Joan Harrison.)

Now, among the 'amazing' things about 'The Mask of Dimitrios' that Hitchcock may have had in mind is its structural resemblance to the famous Orson Welles film **Citizen Kane** (1941): both explore a person's life by means of an investigation conducted by an outsider - a writer or journalist - which results in a series of overlapping flashbacks. When, a few years later, Graham Greene created his own Dimitrios-like character, Harry Lime, for the Carol Reed film **The Third Man** (1949), it was fitting that Welles played the part.[1] Welles, meanwhile, had already produced and starred in his own film of an Ambler novel, **Journey into Fear** (1942).

Surprisingly, none of this is mentioned by Naremore (author of 'The Magic World of Orson Welles', 1989), even though his book's introduction sets out to trace in Hitchcock's films a tradition of British spy fiction whose practitioners included both Ambler and Greene, as well as John Buchan. (There are some even more surprising omissions, as we'll see.) Perhaps Naremore simply wanted to stick closely to his main text, Michael Denning's 'Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller' (1987). From that source comes the information that the spy novel was typically 'patriotic' in outlook yet often almost Kafkaesque in its depiction of individuals beset by authority (p. 7). More generally, the modernist or 'artful' suspense story had four essential features: (1) skepticism towards government institutions, especially legal and political ones; (2) morally ambiguous characters; (3) systematic presentation of points of view; and (4) violent disruptions of typically middle-class propriety and order. (pp. 9-15)

Clearly, a spy thriller could be a very sophisticated object. Well, Naremore has insights to match. He's especially good, in fact, at showing how historically it was Hitchcock, along with several other writers and directors of the 1930s, who strove to refine the genre by reflecting contemporary events and audiences, thereby evolving "'a full-fledged aesthetic ideology'" (p. 9). Thrillers by novelists like Buchan (1875-1940) had lacked irony, and featured 'rather dated plots ... based in a polite ethos of

gentlemanly games' (p. 9). Hitchcock, in particular, kept the polite surface but deepened the stories' psychology as well as other areas of 'realism'. One result, shared with 'modern literature as a whole' (p. 12), was a new sense of 'the tension between individual consciousness and a problematic, unknowable totality' (p. 12). Here Naremore mentions the work of Henry James and Conrad, as well as Greene's 'The Ministry of Fear' (1943) and Ambler's 'The Mask of Dimitrios'. (Something he **doesn't** mention is how the thought of Kant and Schopenhauer seems at least a legitimating factor, especially in Conrad's case.)[2]

Well, apart from neatly expounding matters of ideology, Naremore's Introduction to the **North by Northwest** continuity script, and selected study material, is basic reading about the film because it synthesises several critical approaches - and is written with evident enjoyment. Its tone is never less than sensible-academic (as opposed to, say, what Naremore on page 190 calls the 'wilfully delirious' style of some 'Cahiers du Cinéma' critics), and it's also typically exact. As here:

> fascination of [Hitchcock's] work derived in part from a conflict between his sinister irony and pellucid syntax, which gave each sequence the clean, simplified look of a storyboard or a cartoon. ... The anal-compulsive neatness he brought to the construction of his films was rather an austere dandyism ... (p. 18)

The reference to dandyism invokes an earlier comment on 'Hitchcock's almost Wildean aestheticism' that 'added to the feeling of irreverence' (p. 11). Curiously, Naremore has lately made similar comments about the work of Minnelli, whose career he calls an 'aesthete's progress through the modern economy' ('The Films of Vincente Minnelli', 1993, p. 17).

For my part, I just wish that he had probed further the well-springs of Hitchcock's art in British thriller fiction. After all, there's an audaciousness about **North by Northwest** that isn't so much (or just) 'irreverence' as the sign of a deeply stimulated imagination! In the first place, Naremore doesn't spot the most likely source of the film's MacGuffin - in Greene's 'Our Man in Havana' (1958). Hitchcock had tried to acquire the rights to the novel, but the author had refused to sell them to him: 'I felt the book just wouldn't survive his touch', Greene said later.[3] Miffed, Hitchcock went ahead to create in **North by Northwest** the MacGuffin he called his best, i.e. 'the emptiest, the most nonexistent, and the most absurd' (Hitchcock, quoted by Truffaut). By this, he meant the film's trade in government secrets, which has a kind of correlative in the Prairie Stop scene - another emptiness. Also, of course, there's the middle initial of protagonist Roger O. Thornhill's name ...

Well, the protagonist of Greene's novel, and of Carol Reed's 1960 film version (where he's played in fittingly self-effacing manner by Alec Guinness), is called Wormold, otherwise known as Agent 59200/5 of the story's title. And when Wormold, a vacuum cleaner salesman, has somehow to come up with evidence of secret Cuban military activity, to gratify his bosses in Whitehall, he hits on the idea of sending them sketches of his product known as the Atomic Pile. Soon he finds it necessary to fabricate further 'sightings', and to recruit sub-agents ... (Mind you, an additional stimulus to **North by Northwest**'s concern with mythical agents like 'George Kaplan' - for whom Thornhill is mistaken - may well have been Ronald Neame's enjoyable and well-named 1955 spy thriller, **The Man Who Never Was**, starring Clifton Webb.)[4]

Again, although I don't want to labour this, Naremore's use of the term 'aesthete's progress' (re Minnelli) may conveniently remind us of the indirect descent of **North by Northwest** from the famous morality tale 'Pilgrim's Progress' (1684). Buchan, the son of a Scottish minister, often cites it. For example, in 'Prester John' (1910) he reminds us 'how Christian and Hopeful, after many perils of the way, came to the Delectable Mountains, from which they had a prospect of Canaan' (Chapter 3). The influence of 'Pilgrim's Progress' on his own 'picaresque' story-telling is strong, and thus (I suggest) influences Hitchcock's. In particular, the Mount Rushmore climax of Hitchcock's film shows just such an indebtedness - though as I indicated in 'MacGuffin' 10, among other contributing factors may have been Hitchcock's recently frustrated wish to film Laurens van der Post's adventure novel, 'Flamingo Feather' (1955). The latter is accurately described in a 'Daily Telegraph' review as 'Buchan's "Prester John" crossed with the cream of Rider Haggard'. I'll say something else about it shortly.

But most of all, I wish Naremore had managed to note the contribution to the **élan** of Hitchcock's film of some other British authors, albeit unfashionable ones nowadays. For in fact Buchan was only one of about

three hugely popular, and very skilled, writers of thrillers in England between the wars: the others included 'Dornford Yates' (C.W. Mercer) and 'Sapper' (H.C. McNeile). (The work of all three is the subject of Richard Usborne's 'Clubland Heroes', 1983.) Of Yates, whose technical influence on Hitchcock was probably considerable - as it was on Ian Fleming - I'll say nothing else here, except to commend his work.[5] But I can't pass over the very palpable influence of 'Sapper' on **North by Northwest**.

When I referred above to Hitchcock's audaciousness, I was already mentally comparing him to the exuberant author of 'Bulldog Drummond' (1920) and 'The Final Count' (1926). 'Sapper' was more than the purveyor of what Naremore calls 'square-jawed heroics' à la the American dime novel of the nineteenth century (cf p. 7). Not only did he show himself knowledgeable of Buchan's work, and that of Edgar Wallace, but he invented fictional situations that were often as rousing as anybody's. When, in **North by Northwest**, Thornhill (Cary Grant) is whisked away by his kidnappers to a Long Island house they've occupied while the owner is conveniently absent, and where Vandamm (James Mason) impersonates that owner in his wealth and elegance, the absurdity of the situation echoes one of the London scenes in 'The Final Count' (Chapter 6). Moreover, Vandamm's 'performance' is worthy of Bulldog Drummond's arch-foe, Carl Peterson himself - a criminal mastermind and master of disguise, like Fritz Lang's Dr Mabuse.

Although Hitchcock camouflages the absurd element by giving the events a modicum of plausibility (not least with a motif carried over from the 1958 **Vertigo**, whereby we keep returning to the everyday world), that element can't help but contribute to the film's tone. Which brings me back to the literally fantastic Mount Rushmore scenes. They are more than Buchanesque (or Bunyanesque). To take their full measure, it certainly helps to know of a similar scene set near Land's End in 'The Final Count' (Chapters 8 and 9). There too a nest of Russian spies and thugs, its work done, is preparing to ship out. The scene takes place at night in and around the spies' house built on a rocky cliff. As Drummond approaches the house with a couple of his willing helpers, they see some mysterious signalling out at sea. Just then, a door in the house opens, and for a moment someone is framed in the doorway. Drummond decides to investigate. Crouched in the darkness, and peering into a cave under the house (to which he has climbed down), he and his men overhear some of the Russians conversing nonchalently, while nearby is their prisoner, a kidnapped scientist. Drummond is horrified to hear the spies say that the scientist is soon to be killed. Stepping forward, he and his men try to take charge, only to be surprised in their turn and overpowered - though not before several of the Russians have died a horrible death from a toxic liquid. (This typical 'Sapper' touch of sadism is something Hitchcock himself was not averse to using when it came to the crunch, if you'll allow the pun.) Shortly afterwards, a dirigible arrives overhead ...

That dirigible belongs to Carl Peterson. In the story's climax he dies when the dirigible catches fire and crashes - I dare say, the deep inspiration for the fate of the plane in **North by Northwest**'s Prairie Stop scene. But my main point has been that Naremore, in showing us Hitchcock's indebtedness to 'respectable' authors of spy fiction like Buchan and Ambler, has neglected to mention the director's equal delight in 'Sapper' and his kind.

* * *

About the fifty pages of 'readings' on **North by Northwest** that Naremore provides, I'll be brief. In general, the tone of these pieces is rather dull, especially as compared with the film's full-bodied flavour. And one or two of them offer specimens of tortured academic writing of the worst kind. For instance, how about this sentence of Marion Keane's - which I think must have swallowed strychnine - describing the film's credits sequence?

> The deep issue raised in the magical appearance of the film's image regards what the world so conjured actually is. (p. 217)

Fortunately, sanity and good writing are represented by Robin Wood's overview of the film, reprinted from his 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989). Also, if at times Hitchcock lies his head off to Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet of 'Cahiers du Cinéma', saying of the expressionist touches in his work that 'I've been influenced by no one' (p. 182), John Brady's interview with screenwriter Ernest Lehman sticks to pragmatics - in a most delightful way.

I was gratified, too, by 'Cahiers' critic Luc Moullet's 1959 comparison of Hitchcock to Cecil B. De Mille ('the two masters of Paramount' - p. 196). Moullet makes the point, picked up by Naremore, that 'In the same way that De Mille represents the Red Sea and the burning bush as if they were animated drawings, Hitchcock adheres strongly to the cartoon tradition' (p. 197). Earlier, I mentioned Hitchcock's interest, when he was at Paramount, in filming the novel 'Flamingo Feather'. Well, the climax of that tale (Chapter 17) has its hero approach an African chieftain in a vast mountain basin, filled with 50,000 watching tribesmen. And around the rim of the basin are a further 100,000 women and children, also watching. As you read the account, you're reminded of a scene staged by De Mille! Sure enough, when the hero, one Pierre de Beauvilliers, rides his horse at full gallop through the tribesmen, you read that they 'split open as the waters of the Red Sea once parted before Moses's command'. I'm convinced that a major factor in Hitchcock's wanting to film the story was the opportunity it would give him of emulating De Mille's spectacular **The Ten Commandments** (1956)! Just as I'm convinced that when he learnt that he wouldn't be allowed to have the 50,000 Africans he had asked for (see Truffaut), he immediately lost interest in the project.

* * *

The continuity script (transcript) of **North by Northwest**, which provides the bulk of Naremore's book, is scrupulously done - a complete description of the film, all 1,330 shots of it. Naremore has picked up little details that not all of us had noticed. Did you realise, for instance, that one of Vandamm's henchmen holds his cigarette between thumb and forefinger, Gestapo style (p. 49)?

On the other hand, several technical matters have eluded description. Hitchcock's turning off of the 'buzz-track' (ambient noise) when Thornhill is told by the Professor in the pine forest that Eve (Eva Marie Saint) is leaving with Vandamm that night, isn't mentioned, except in the transcript's single description, 'a shocked pause' (p. 144). More crucially, the reddish or earthy colour of the skyscraper facade in the film's credits, followed by shots of office-workers pouring out of buildings and down subways, is divested of any of its Dantesque significance (in fact, the film's artful use of tints and filters is nowhere noted). As I mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 11, the credits sequence of **Vertigo** also has its Dantesque passage. This time, another 'Inferno' reference combines with the famous echo of Dante in T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' ('A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many'). Professor John Carey has commented recently on how it was largely through Eliot's influence that, by the 1930s, the (Nietzschean) assumption that most people are dead had become 'a standard item in the repertoire of any self-respecting intellectual' ('The Intellectuals and the Masses', 1992, p. 10).

Rightly, Naremore's transcript keeps what appear to have been slips made during the film's shooting. Thus Thornhill's line at the Plaza Hotel about the man in the photograph being 'Our friend who's assembling the General Assembly this afternoon' (p. 65) is retained, with its faint similarity to his earlier remark, 'Why don't we colonize at the Colony one day next week for lunch?' (p. 37) As even the original Ernest Lehman screenplay (Viking Press, 1972) has the reference to 'assembling', perhaps the line was felt to be suitably informal - there are precedents in **Vertigo** in some of Scottie's more extempore-sounding remarks!

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Notes

1. Both Dimitrios and Lime are ruthless drug-runners. Thought to be dead, both turn up very much alive.

2. For the considerable influence of Schopenhauer on Conrad, see Bryan Magee , 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), pp. 385-6.

3. See Neil Sinyard, 'Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation' (1986), p. 108. Sinyard has a four-page discussion of Hitchcock and Greene as 'kindred spirits'.

4. Neame's film was scripted by the estimable novelist and screenwriter, Nigel Balchin.

5. Fleming was particularly impressed at how Yates could handle car chases. To see why, look at 'How a Telegram Came for Jill', in Yates's 'Jonah and Co' (1922) - with a likely influence on Hitchcock's To Catch a Thief (1955), too.

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Mood Swings: Hitchcock's 'Young and Innocent' (1937)

The night always exaggerates things, doesn't it?

- Robert to Erica, **Young and Innocent**

It's a strange world, isn't it?

- Jeffrey to Sandy, **Blue Velvet** (1986)

Claude Chabrol thinks that what stirs us most as we watch the road scenes in Hitchcock's **Psycho** (1960) is Bernard Herrmann's score, or 'metaphysics'.[1] That is, Marion Crane's panicky drive into the night affects us mainly because of the eloquent, headlong music.

It's a good point. Of course, it needs to be seen in its proper context. And such a context, I suggest, is simply the complementary nature of Hitchcock's and Herrmann's work together. For a start, Hitchcock was never a director to concern himself unduly with abstractions.[2] He always said that his main job was to keep his films moving, 'to tell a good story and develop a hefty plot.'[3] Themes (including 'metaphysical' ones) might be left to 'emerge as we go along'.[4]

By the same token, every film buff knows how propitious it was that Hitchcock and Herrmann found each other. As Herrmann said, the two men shared 'a great unanimity of ideas' (see 'MacGuffin' 8). Well, that unanimity may have had at least this much of a metaphysical basis: both artists seem to have believed in the existence of a universal 'Under-nature' which their respective mediums might at once express and transcend (ibid).[5] From the waxing and waning of autumn (fall) in **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) to the strident 'cry in the night' that accompanies the very titles-sequence of **Marnie** (1964), what you always feel in the Hitchcock-Herrmann films is the presence of powerful forces, sometimes apparently benign but more often threatening (or contending).

I repeat, though, that Hitchcock always strove to keep his films moving, and he developed a further metaphysic to match. Movement in film, he told 'Cahiers du Cinéma', has inherent meaning, if only because it reflects the essential circumstance of film production and film projection.[6] So what I now want to note is this. If you combine Hitchcock's 'dynamic' metaphysic with the other one, the one concerning a universal Under-nature, you arrive at something very like the philosopher Schopenhauer's notion of an all-pervasive Will or life-force - seen in nature most fundamentally as an implacable, blind striving.

Nor is that quite all. Movement is the most characteristic extension of Will, and when photographed and projected it may remind us of the essential categories of our knowledge (time, space and causality).[7] That would seem to make Hitchcock's concept of dynamic cinema reflexive not just of the medium but - virtually - of the viewer's very existence. In this spirit, when the director chose to film the Robert Bloch novel called 'Psycho', he could hardly have failed to see just how rich in 'fundamentals' it is. In movement, above all. It contains a car journey, a particularly vicious murder in a shower (plenty of running water and blood), an investigation. Also, it's palpably about life and death. It speaks to us of forces that are indeed both implacable and blind. And, being about psychology, it could be said to touch on a universal Under-nature which is very real if invisible.

Now, Hitchcock would do his best to put all of this on the screen. Given suitable collaborators (the project had a modest budget), why mightn't the result affect audiences in truly existential ways, at the very core of their being?

Certainly, with Bernard Herrmann's help, that's what it seems to have done.

* * *

But this article is about a comparatively early application of Hitchcock's metaphysic, and especially the aspect that stressed a film's need to 'move around'.[8] Looked at thus, **Young and Innocent** is likely to be revealing, for it was Hitchcock's favourite among his British films.[9] I'll also make reference below to a much more recent work, David Lynch's bizarre **Blue Velvet**. Both films have a similar storyline inasmuch as they're about a youth who finds himself poised between an older, married woman - a public entertainer - and a teenage girl, the daughter of a policeman.

Further, I'll try to show in some detail what use Hitchcock and his screenwriter, Charles Bennett, made of Josephine Tey's novel, 'A Shilling For Candles' (1936). In particular, I want to show that the film's famous climax, which unmasks a murderer, owes more to the novel than Bennett's ingenious adaptation has been given credit for (thereby also blocking the credit due to Tey).

To begin, then, here's a paradigm of just how readily movement in film can generate meaning. Among the many lively scenes in **Young and Innocent** - a film rightly described by critic Penelope Gilliatt as one of Hitchcock's sunniest -[10] is the collapse of an old mine-workings. In a matter of seconds, the teenage heroine, Erica Burgoyne (Nova Pilbeam), loses her antique car and very nearly her life. If the scene is a fraction too rapidly done, it still has impact anyway just because of its context: we're suddenly plunged out of sunshine into gloom and peril. Simultaneously, a couple of thematic points get made. One of them (to be found in the novel) concerns how Erica is growing up: it's time her slightly absurd attachment to her car was transferred to something - or someone - more fitting ...[11]

But that's only the half of it. In this moment of peril, Erica loses some of her innocence. To make the point, Hitchcock inserts close-ups showing the girl wide-eyed with terror, clinging for her life. These shots could almost have come from **Psycho**, and they manage to imply not just oblivion but a glimpse of our untranscended Under-nature, i.e. things that Marion Crane also seeks to turn from (in her case, too late). [illegible] being 'metaphysical' here, but just go back and look at the film. Then consider this passage from a novel by Josephine Tey called 'The Singing Sands' (1952). The protagonist, Inspector Alan Grant, is recuperating in the Scottish Highlands from overwork, and becomes momentarily impatient with his hostess, his cousin Laura.

> She was far too complacent. She was far too happy, here in her fastness, with her ... security. It would do her good to have some demons to fight; to be swung out in space and held over some bottomless pit now and then. (Chapter 3)

That's all - but it's sufficient. No reader of the passage misunderstands the 'metaphysical' meaning of those 'demons' and the image of the bottomless pit.

* * *

Something Hitchcock doesn't do in the mine-collapse scene is include a shot à la **Vertigo** (1958) of the chasm over which Erica becomes suspended - probably because it would have been next to impossible to shoot directly down a coal mine![12] But then, we don't need such a shot anyway, inasmuch that the film's opening scene concludes with a high-view of waves breaking on rocks at night, a shot which effectively stands in for the later peril.

That memorable opening scene is crucial to the film's strategy. Its tone is decidedly melodramatic. One night, in the clifftop cottage of the successful but now middle-aged film actress, Christine Clay, she's confronted by her husband who accuses her of sleeping with young men. No doubt out of jealousy and because he feels his own advancing age, the husband not only refuses Christine's request for a divorce but indicates that he intends to come back and live with her. As the couple quarrel, lightning flickers on the walls and thunder rumbles. The husband's basic charge is specific. 'You lied when you married me and you lied to get rid of me. ... I, who worked for you, took you out of the chorus, lifted you out of the gutter.' Christine protests, but when her husband again says he's disgusted at her 'going around with boys', she slaps him. Whereupon, the camera, by means of a cut, follows him through a heavy door and onto a balcony, where waves are breaking in the background. A flash of lightning shows that his eyes are twitching.

Very soon Christine will be dead and her husband will have fled. Then the film's sunny tone and summery skies will belie what we've just seen - much as a similar strategy is employed in **Blue Velvet** (where, though, it's the film's opening that is idyllic, and subsequent events that are frequently grotesque). Nevertheless, once again a point or two has been made: not all marriages are blessed in Heaven, and decidedly youth and innocence are short-lived.

And Hitchcock's ambiguous touches will keep teasing us. For instance, the circumstances of Christine's alleged misdemeanours aren't given, and anyway are balanced by the portrait of the plucky, 'innocent' Erica that follows. Nor do we ever learn the exact background of the young man called Robert Tisdall (Derrick de Marney), a budding screenwriter, who's about to figure at the centre of the story - although it **is** clear that he's the 'boy' whom Christine's husband saw at the cottage. The difference between the film and the novel on this point is one of shadings. The film all but convinces us that Robert's several visits to the cottage were purely innocent ones to discuss a script he'd written. The novel employs darker hues. There, Robert admits he'd started to steal Christine's car but had then returned it. Also, when news comes that Christine's murdered body has been found on a beach, most of her colleagues are stunned and want to know more about the 'good-looking boy' who has been arrested.

> 'Tisdall?' they said, puzzled. 'Never heard of him.'
> All but [actress] Judy Sellers.
> Her mouth opened in dismay, stayed that way helplessly for a moment, and then shut tightly; and a blind came down over her face. [Inspector] Grant watched the display in surprised interest.
> (Chapter 6)

As nothing comes of this small incident, I take it merely to be a hint that Tisdall has been sleeping around, and breaking a few hearts in the process. Which, of course, makes him no more nor less innocent of major crime than young Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan) in **Blue Velvet**, who cheats on Sandy (Laura Dern) and sleeps with the married Dorothy (Isabella Rossellini) whose involvement with the brutal gangster called Frank (Dennis Hopper) he has been investigating ...

* * *

Young and Innocent, too, involves an investigation. Suspected of being Christine's murderer, Robert goes on the run. With Erica's at-first reluctant help, he decides that if he can locate his stolen raincoat (whose belt had been used to strangle Christine), he will have found a vital clue to the real murderer's identity. Meanwhile, the police ploddingly pursue their own investigations. (In **Blue Velvet**, the police aren't so much plodding as dilatory ...) Which raises a further aspect of the film. I've called this article 'Mood Swings' in order to focus attention on a key 'binary' principle of the film's structure, one that is 'theatrical' and related to the implicit maxim that 'the show must go on'. [illegible] moment the credits sequence. Musically, it consists of a succession of **contrasted** moods, culminating in a specific dance number which will figure at the film's climax as the all-important 'Drummer Man'. Visually, it consists of a single semi-abstract design: a large slanting area of whiteness shading into black at both sides. To my eyes, the suggestion the design makes is of the broad beam of a theatrical spotlight, and hence of the film itself as a kind of stage. Well, in 'MacGuffin' 10, I noted how Hitchcock's films often climax in a theatre, or some equivalent place such as a dance-floor, thereby carrying the (levelling) reminder that 'all the world's a stage'. To that point I would now add this: that for all Hitchcock's characters, whether they're nominally heroes or villains, there **is** no running away - a similar 'maturing' (or 'learning') process acts on both. I'll try and show below that such a motif is particularly strong in **Young and Innocent**.

* * *

In 'MacGuffin' 6, Charles Barr remarked of **Young and Innocent** that it contains 'an extraordinary and perhaps calculated symmetry in what might be termed the hypnagogic structure'. He was referring to how the film can be seen as both the boy-meets-girl fantasy of Robert, a scriptwriter, and as Erica's reciprocal fantasy or dream (she twice falls asleep and has to be physically rescued or otherwise 'saved' by him). Moreover, the scenes in which **one or the other** character is shown losing consciousness seem to mirror each other in their relative positions vis-à-vis the start and end of the film.

I think the notion of a 'hypnagogic' structure (one that accommodates various states of consciousness) fits well with the notion of film as continuous movement or flow that I'm exploring here. At the same time, it's important we note how the motif of consciousness/unconsciousness represents only one of several sets of contraries, or binary oppositions, that propel the film. We've already met some of these. They include: day/night, high/low, seashore/countryside, fast/slow, smart/stupid, rich/poor - as well as the two most obvious ones of young/old and innocent/experienced (or innocent/guilty). Apart from helping to underline points (as in the mine-collapse scene) and establish themes (above all, life-as-theatre), the play of contraries also contributes to the film's tone, rhythms and suspense - note the several musical terms. Many were the interviews in which Hitchcock likened 'pure film' to music (while Schopenhauer, for his part, thought that music was pure, orchestrated Will) ...

* * *

After Christine's murder, Robert is taken in for questioning. His all-night interrogation ends at dawn, twenty-four hours after the actress's body was found in the surf. When two Scotland Yard detectives tell him that Christine has left him £1,200 in her will, Robert faints. This is ambiguous: it might, or might not, be just a sign of his tiredness. At any rate, the moment is ripe for a **fresh** consciousness to enter the film. That consciousness proves to be Erica's. Significantly, she's looking for her father.[13] The latter is Chief Constable of the county, and this is his office. Erica seems quite at home here. Sizing up what has happened, she takes charge. She sends one of the detectives for brandy and meanwhile administers to Robert other forms of resuscitation such as ear-pulling, which she explains she learnt in 'a boxers' dressing-room - brings them round like fun'. The tone of the film has brightened perceptibly. Sunlight is shining through the window; and Erica, an outdoors type of girl, will be associated with it throughout the film.

When Robert first comes round, then immediately appears to suffer a relapse and sinks back against Erica's 'motherly' figure, this moment is ambiguous too.[14] The more so, as next instant he recovers again, and scrambles to his feet. It's typical of Hitchcock that contradictory meanings flow from this brief episode. The feigned and the genuine - which is which? For a comparison, recall a moment of coyness between Jeffrey and Sandy in **Blue Velvet**, in which she tells him, 'I don't know whether you're a detective or a pervert.' In Americanese, that means roughly 'extravert or introvert' ...

Erica exits the room as dramatically as she'd entered it, casting a dismissive glance back towards Robert and saying, 'Next time throw a bucket of water over him.' Of course, what her sudden presence in the room has done is distract us from the possibly thorny question of why Christine left Robert a large sum of money. Something similar will occur during the scene in an old mill, when Robert tells Erica that he'd met Christine only 'three or four times'. As he says this, he casually throws a paper wrapping out the window - and the film cuts outside to two searching policemen who have spotted it. Keeping things moving, then, has the added advantages for storytellers of both helping to get them out of corners and of not dispelling the suspense!

Erica has already impressed us with her resourcefulness. Now it's Robert's turn. At least three times in the film he shows remarkable forethought in stealing an object for later use (cf his stealing Christine's car in the novel). Here, faced with being represented by a decrepit local lawyer named Briggs, he steals the man's glasses and uses them as a disguise when he sneaks away from the court-house. (Meanwhile, another court hearing has just ended, significantly involving a husband being bound over not to desert his nagging wife. Shades of the 1954 **Rear Window** - even to the possibility that the husband may have been the more blameworthy party in the first place. On the other hand, we can't be sure ...)

Briggs, without glasses, is left practically blind. As Robert slips away, he passes someone else who's preoccupied about a lens: namely, Hitchcock, who's playing a photographer equipped with a ridiculously small camera. With futile gestures, this rather portly man in a cloth cap (symbolic of the working-class?) tries to wave away the crowd spilling out of the court-house and spoiling his camera's view. In 'MacGuffin' 4, I noted how in **Psycho** a myopic little man dominates the background of the scene on the Fairvale church steps. Myopia seems a common infliction in these films, including **Blue Velvet** - where, though, the **blind** man who works in Beaumonts' hardware store seems more percipient than nearly everyone else.[15]

Much of the rest of the film occurs in the countryside, allowing a great deal of further 'local colour'. I suspect it was this ingredient that prompted Penelope Gilliatt to invoke the good-humoured 'Berry' stories of Dornford Yates (1885-1960).[16] Perhaps reflecting Erica's own helpfulness (Robert likens her to both Florence Nightingale and Flora Macdonald),[17] many of the characters along the way prove to be particularly obliging. Mind you, by the nature of Hitchcock's cinema, you don't get anything without its opposite. So in these same scenes, there's the Chaplinesque free-for-all (cf **Easy Street**) at the pull-in known as Tom's Hat, and there's the surly proprietor of the no less Chaplinesque flophouse called Nobby's (cf **Triple Trouble**). In turn, the Chaplin references are doubtless connected with the crucial importance in the film's second half of the old china-mender named Will, described by one of the other characters as 'more or less of a tramp'.

It's time we looked at some particular scenes.

* * *

Of several masterly set-pieces in **Young and Innocent**, the first I'll mention is the dinner-table scene in the Burgoyne household. Actually there are two such scenes - suitably opposed in mood - as well as a third that was never used: it was to end the film and show Robert, after being exonerated of Christine's murder, sitting down to join the Burgoynes in a meal. But I'll describe only the first, which occurs when Erica has come home after leaving Robert hidden in the old mill. She is clearly preoccupied - to our eyes, at least - and thus is unappreciative of her four schoolboy brothers' chatter. And as her father, at the other end of the table, is also thoughtful, because his men haven't yet found the court-house escapee, the meal might have been a dismal affair all round. But nobody told the four boys that: so the scene is at once comic and charming and dramatic, as well as adding to the local colour.

Erica, whose mother had died when she was born,[18] has the maternal role in the household, and now she says grace. Two parlour-maids serve the meal. Immediately, the boys start talking. Of these, the eldest is the family 'swot': he thinks that grace 'ought to be said in Latin, really'. (When the film later shows an even more patrician family, that of Erica's aunt and uncle, the Roman influence will indeed be displayed.) We don't learn this boy's name. Next comes Richard, who likes nothing better than to make good-natured (?) fun of his older brother. As for young Stanley, he's happy to show off at table the large filling the dentist had given him during the day; he prefers to forget that he'd been 'wobbling like a jellyfish' at breakfast. Finally, there's the youngest boy, Christopher, who keeps saying 'okay' and whose triumph of the day has been to shoot a rat in the back-yard with his air-gun. He produces the hapless creature at table - rather like Arnie with his rabbit in **The Trouble With Harry**.

Not only does Hitchcock contrast one dinner-table scene with a second, but he typically breaks each individual scene into halves, also of differing moods. Here, he does it by having Erica's father (Percy Marmont), a generous soul, take a phone call in the next room, during which we hear a conversation that sounds the film's characteristic note of sympathy for the man-on-the-run. Colonel Burgoyne observes that the escapee is probably feeling very hungry by now. Naturally Erica hears the remark too. When the Colonel re-enters the dining room, one of the boys is - in all innocence - merely contemptuous of the police's lack of success. 'They want some young blood, don't they father?' With the possibly double-edged meaning of that comment echoing in her ears, Erica excuses herself from table.

* * *

The ensuing scene, back in the mill where Erica has brought Robert some bread, includes the latter's extempore meal. Standing up, because there's no table, and spreading butter with his fingers, because Erica has either forgotten or dared not provide, a knife, he makes good use of his pockets and the folds of his jumper to dispose of left-overs. Erica watches, and can't help be impressed. It's a touching scene, and just a little bit erotic. Note the actors' expressions. Piquancy is added by the threat of discovery, by Erica's uncertainty about how to handle her new feelings, and by the fact that **both** parties are in some way defying (Lacan's) 'the name of the father'. In much of this, of course, **Blue Velvet** may again come to mind ...

I shan't describe the scene at Tom's Hat, except to note how Robert tries at first to stay out of sight but gets drawn into the mêlée when it forms. And how once again an obliging person comes forward:

here, a lorry driver, who thinks he knows where Will the china-mender may be found. Namely, at Nobby's, thirty miles away.

At the end of the Tom's Hat scene, Erica, who is still a little confused, wishes Robert luck in searching for the raincoat; he thanks her and sets off on foot, hoping to soon get a lift. Before him stretches one of the mile-long straights of English lane described in Josephine Tey's novel. The film gives this vista pathos by showing it from Erica's viewpoint and by having a car pass Robert without stopping. (Cf the livery-stable scene in **Vertigo**, in which Scottie feels he's losing Madeleine and looks up to watch a car receding down a road.) An ellipsis restores him to her side, as they drive towards Nobby's ...

* * *

However, to give Erica an alibi for being away from home, they must first visit her aunt and uncle's house nearby. We've already just seen a chauffeur-driven car, and clearly this is an exclusive residential neighbourhood - not at all like Tom's Hat and its environs. Sure enough, the house proves to be a large, two-storey affair, and a manservant answers the door. Inside, a children's party is in progress.

Now comes another of the film's major set-pieces. It really has no **plot** reason for being in the film - but then, the memorable scene in **Blue Velvet** with Ben (Dean Stockwell), the effeminate brothel-keeper, has little or no direct reason for its inclusion there, either. Nevertheless, both scenes are fully functional in almost surreal ways. The one in Lynch's film shows us an alternative, hidden centre of power in the town of Lumberton; Hitchcock's scene perversely mirrors its wider world, too. Interestingly, Hitchcock called his scene 'a deliberate symbol' - only to see it cut from the original American-release print!

If the children's-party scene is indeed a symbol, one of the things it's most symbolic of is ebb and flow, i.e. movement. It has no single centre, and that's its vital point. Of course, it's **about** youth and age, and the defeating by common action of a too-rigid, matriarchal supervision - yet literally **no one** is in control here, unless it's Hitchcock. Let's look more closely.

For a start, there's no corresponding scene in the novel, but just a passing reference to Erica's having a rather fearsome great-aunt who lives near (Royal) Tunbridge Wells. The great-aunt sometimes promenades 'under the lime trees' (Chapter 13). This, I take it, constitutes a reminder of how Tunbridge Wells, for centuries a fashionable spa centre, remains a place to be 'seen' in, with its promenade called 'The Pantiles'. (I'll note below how, in both the novel and the film, nearly **everyone** seems to want public 'recognition'.)[19] In the film, when Erica arrives at her Aunt Mary's house, the manservant tells her that today is young Felicity's (seventh) birthday; he shows her into a large drawing-room from which the slightly jarring strains of some BBC children's programme are coming. Here, Felicity's guests, and their minders, are assembled to watch a conjuror perform. Prominent features of the room's décor are large Roman-type marble busts, on pedestals.[20] Aunt Mary, played by character actress Mary Clare, sits in a high-backed armchair, from which she beckons Erica to join her.

Erica instantly feels trapped. Robert is still in the car (just as he had been before the mêlée at Tom's Hat), and may be recognised at any moment. But her aunt wants her to help entertain the children. So it's ironic, and for Erica, galling, when she soon finds herself sent outside the room again while the children hide a thimble. And it's even more ironic when next moment Uncle Basil (Basil Radford) arrives home for the day in his chauffeur-driven car, and insists on inviting Robert in. As he says, 'We can't leave you outside like a criminal.'

When Aunt Mary comes to the drawing-room door to call Erica back, the first thing she sees - a nice piece of literal direction by Hitchcock - is her niece and Robert in the hall, whispering anxiously, for all the world as if they were fugitive lovers, or worse.[21] 'I'm sorry, I didn't know', she says coldly. Uncle Basil barely retrieves the situation by explaining how he'd come upon Robert in the car. We've already recognised Aunt Mary to be the imperious type, and she remains suspicious. The scene is no longer 'innocent'.

Yet, in a neat counterpoint, children feature at its centre. Hitchcock's direction of very young actors

throughout the film is superb. When, as here, they're required to portray children being little adults, with their own mores, they do it in style. First, the children sense that something is up, and that nice Erica has lost interest in playing find-the-thimble. Whereupon, the young man called Harold (who shortly before had been requesting permission to go to the lavatory) snaps, 'C'mon, we'll play it on our own', and pulls Felicity away. Now some signalling between Erica and Robert is noticed by Aunt Mary, who makes her niece come and sit beside her (like a child or a pet). Party hats and bonbons are distributed. Aunt Mary starts to read out the motto from Harold's bonbon - '"Love calls but once, So passion ..."' - then breaks off. Just then, ice-creams arrive, prompting Uncle Basil to murmur that it's 'in the nick of time'. He blows on a roll-up toy whistle, not without a certain suggestiveness.

Which isn't to say, in psychoanalytic parlance again, that Uncle Basil has been 'de-sexed' by his matriarch of a wife. On the contrary, their marriage stands out as the **least** dysfunctional in the film - being based, you feel, on a mutual compromise whereby the wife rules the household and the husband has his work! It anticipates, in a way, the Oxfords' marriage in **Frenzy** (1972). But then, it's very rare to find in Hitchcock **any** questioning of the sustaining-power of a man's job - whereas professional women (like Christine Clay) are often shown to spell trouble.[22] So the depiction of marriage in this scene effectively balances the melodramatic opening scene. Also, to the extent that it paints an **affectionate** warts-and-all picture of Aunt Mary as matriarch, it complements the palpable **absence** of a mother in the Burgoyne household: the message is that mothers matter.

there are times when the mother's power must be got around (just as there are times when patriarchy must be circumvented). After all, even parents have their blind-spots, and can't quickly be made to see reason! We scarcely need scientists or philosophers to tell us such basic truths![23] That's why Uncle Basil has no trouble in calling on Felicity and Harold for a spot of necessary collusion. At any rate, not after Harold has first swiped another child's ice-cream for his trouble. No fool, he! But once he's suitably fortified, he turns to see what Uncle Basil wants.

Uncle Basil has noticed that his spouse's questions are causing Erica and Robert discomfort. Being another of the film's helpful, sympathetic characters, he decides to put the children up to requesting a game of blindman's-buff. Then he suggests that Aunt Mary herself should be 'blindman'. Harold is enthusiastic. 'Tie her up, Uncle', he encourages. Aunt Mary starts to object, but Robert adds his own encouragement. 'Then you can try to catch me', he says innocently. At this moment the radio plays a snatch of 'Three Blind Mice'.

The upshot is that Erica and Robert manage to flee the house and rejoin Erica's dog Towser waiting in the car, then drive away. What we've just watched has been a marvellous, swirling scene, a microcosm of the film and of perhaps rather more: for example, of 'dear old England'. (Not without satire. Aunt Mary might be a Victorian or Edwardian relic. Perhaps it's significant that she mistakes Robert, a very modern young man, for a family acquaintance who rather anachronistically proves to be in India.) Several of the scene's motifs, such as perspicacity/blindness, occur elsewhere in the film. Also, in its little escapades and dodges, the scene partakes of a life we can acknowledge as our own. Part of what's marvellous is how Hitchcock's art transforms it - in a way, **restores** its innocence.

* * *

The police's search for Robert extends to 'Ashcroft Forest' at night, their torches flashing futilely against the tree-trunks. Like other place-names in the film, this one is fictitious, although redolent of Ashdown Forest in Kent. The film seems to be, in fact, a slightly bizarre amalgam of Kentish locales - thus far following the novel - and others, such as we glimpse in the opening scene where no doubt to get the specific effect of waves breaking on fierce rocks Hitchcock had sent a unit to Cornwall.[24]

In any event, the scene I'm now coming to seems to fit best one of the populous Home Counties (e.g. Kent). It's another set-piece, and a fine one. Erica and Robert have stopped under cover of night beside a railway shunting-yard outside a town. Hitchcock here uses a model-shot, one whose mood, contrary to reports by some truly dull critics, is palpable and very lovely. I'm referring to the right-to-left tracking-shot showing a steam-train rushing under a moonlit bridge where we've just seen a car cross; to the play of light on the nearby housefronts from the car's headlamps and from a lit-up signal box; to the sounds of the speeding train, of shunting, and of a tolling bell; and to the tilt of

the camera as, arriving near Erica and Robert's parked car, it moves to show this focal-point of the tableau. For at least one viewer, this tracking-shot is the technical highlight of the film, excelling the later crane- and track-in to a man's twitching eyes which everyone notices (and **compliments** each other for noticing, as Hitchcock undoubtedly knew they would!). In 'MacGuffin' 5, I quoted Maurice Yacowar's appreciative comments on the complexity of a shot of a miniature bus and train in **Number Seventeen** (1932), but the model-work in **Young and Innocent** achieves a whole new sophistication.

Erica and Robert's ensuing conversation in the car gives them a few moments of intimacy. In this, the scene corresponds to the pine-forest scene in **North by Northwest**. The mood is one of how it's always darkest before the dawn. As Robert puts it: 'You can see no end, can you? ... The night always exaggerates things, doesn't it? Personally, I like the night. It's much more alive than the day.'[25] The lights of another train flash by. As Erica begins to fall asleep, her natural self-concern becomes concern for Robert. 'I don't want anything to happen to you, either', she murmurs. But Robert doesn't hear, for he has already moved off, leaving Towser on guard.

The next scene takes place at Nobby's, nearby. I'll note only its outcome: No sooner has Robert, early next morning, found Will the china-mender, than he looks out the window and sees potential disaster: Erica is still asleep in her car which is now fully exposed beside the railway tracks. On the film's motif of its hero and heroine's constant seeking to avoid public 'exposure' - the obverse of the urge to be 'recognised' - I'll say more below.

Grabbing the startled Will, Robert runs from the building. The camera tracks along behind, creating a 'getting nowhere fast' effect. Meanwhile, the suspicious flophouse proprietor has called the police. Now comes another witty homage to old-time movies, of the Keystone Kops variety, which is adroitly assembled - not least in how it manages to incorporate views of the town and its bridge we had glimpsed in the moonlight. The effect on the viewer is elating, speaking again of a higher innocence ...

* * *

The mine-collapse scene follows. During it, Erica becomes parted from Robert. She returns home, disgraced in her father's eyes, and retreats to her upstairs bedroom where she sobs herself to sleep. This is the second time she has fallen asleep, matching Robert's fainting-spell and his sleep in the loft of the old mill. We have now arrived at the absolute Slough of Despond (or darkest hour) in this 'Pilgrim's Progress' of a film.[26] Yet, as Maurice Yacowar notices, as Erica lies on her bed she assumes the foetal position ...[27]

Hereabouts, too, there are further 'iconic' references for Hitchcock to invoke, from fairy tales to current movies. Thus Robert now comes to the rescue by climbing up to Erica's window, like a fabulous prince. And as Erica is about to attend her first 'ball', he's certainly her potential Prince Charming. By displacement, as it were, a witty policeman in the next scene will tell Will (who is escorting Erica in Robert's stead) that he's like a character in 'Cinderella'. Moreover, that next scene will centre around the Grand Hotel (cf the novel's Marine Hotel). Greta Garbo must have been in Hitchcock's mind. When Erica first wakes from her sleep, and Robert tells her he has come to say goodbye, the music and some radiant, William Daniels-type backlighting portray her as a tragic heroine, à la Garbo in **Camille** (1936). But then the pendulum - and the mood - swings again, and provides a clue which everyone has overlooked.

That vital clue combines small and large : a matchbox with 'Grand Hotel' printed on it. Such a conceit would have appealed to Hitchcock (cf 'MacGuffin' 12). It introduces the play of contraries in the final scene. One instance of that play is the famous crane-shot moving from a distant view to an extreme close-up, which unmasks a villain. Another is the important motif of 'inside' versus 'outside'. Let's examine the scene for what it shows of Hitchcock's 'pure cinema' - and the extensive way it transposes material from the novel.

Erica and Will gain admittance to the Grand Hotel not as paying guests but merely as casuals, as patrons of its tea-room where a well-attended (in two senses) thé-dansant is in full swing, this being the height of the holiday season. Unfortunately for the pair's intentions, Will's shiny new suit has already aroused the suspicion of a constable in the street; even when the pair are seated in the tea-room, the

policeman keeps an eye on them through a window. Further, the policeman has dutifully reported to his superiors that the Chief Constable's daughter is inside. As they anxiously look around for the man with the twitching eyes, they're very aware of being watched themselves, and that time is short. In turn, the man in question - Christine Clay's husband, who is now a drummer in the hotel's minstrel band - has already spotted them, too. When he recognises Will, he begins to blink hideously. His twitching eyes are not exactly concealed by his black-face make-up ...

Now, much of what I've just described is transposed from several quite different scenes in the novel. The latter even has a different guilty party: namely, an acquaintance of the murdered Christine, a seeress named Lydia Keats, who prophesies the actress's death - and who secretly proceeds to carry it out. (In the novel, both Tisdall and Christine's aristocratic husband merely number among the various suspects. These further include Christine's ne'er-do-well brother.) The key chapter here is Chapter 19, ten from the end, told through the eyes of a journalist on the case, 'Jammy' Hopkins. Learning that Lydia Keats is to give one of her lunchtime talks at a public hall in London, Jammy decides to attend. But his initial interest is not with the rather boring Lydia:

> Jammy refused the seat which had been reserved for the **Clarion** representative, and insisted on **having** one ... on the far side of the hall below the platform. This had been refused, with varying degrees of indignation, by both those who had come to see Lydia and those who had come to be seen. But Jammy belonged to neither of these. What Jammy had come to see was the audience.

Next, Jammy notices something surprising. Someone else at this large gathering isn't attending to Lydia either. This person, who had been yet another member of Christine's circle, is named Marta Hallard; and Marta is intently watching a 'small, round-faced Jew with [a] sleepy expression' seated near her in front. He's Jason Harmer, 'popularly supposed to have been Christine [Clay's] lover'. Well, this whole elaborate business of 'the watcher watched' proves in the novel to be something of a red herring, i.e. largely wasted, though not before Jammy has begun to suspect that one of the pair **he's** watching is the murderer. In fact,

> [he] hadn't been so excited since Old Man Willingdon had given him the exclusive story of how and why he had beaten his wife into pulp.

Just as the meeting seems about to break up, Lydia Keats calls for questions. In answering one of these, she steps to the front of the platform. 'The murderer of Christine [Clay]', she says, 'is here in this hall.' There's a moment's hush, then consternation. As people rush to the exits, someone goes to assist Lydia. That's when Jammy hears her blurt (recalling Mr Memory in Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps**, which preceded the Tey novel by a year), 'Oh what made me say that?'

These details amount, let's notice, to a play on different types of 'seeing'. Yet the novel has other climaxes - and it looks as if Hitchcock was reluctant to forgo any of them! One occurs in a Roman Catholic monastery at, of all places, Canterbury (famous for its Anglican cathedral). Here, Christine's ne'er-do-well brother is tracked down. Far from being the 'Brother Aloysius' he's been calling himself, he proves to be a phoney evangelist and con-artist who has fooled even the monastery's head monk, and who has had his eyes on the monastery's valuables. Moreover, those eyes provide the very focal-point of the scene in which Inspector Grant comes on his quarry praying with the other monks at a midnight service. Grant speculates how 'Being theatrical to no audience but oneself must soon pall'. He confronts 'Brother Aloysius', who denies everything, yet Grant notices 'that the expression in the man's small eyes was hate' (Chapter 21)

And again, Robert, contra the film, spends much of the novel not on the run but simply hiding in the roof of the Marine Hotel. Late one night he climbs down into the hotel's deserted kitchen where he chances upon a newspaper, which he idly starts to read. Suddenly, says the novel,

> he began to laugh. Softly and consumedly, drumming with his fists on the scrubbed wood. His laughter grew, beyond his control. (Chapter 24)

Thus does Robert learn that he has been cleared.

Finally, there's the arrest of the true murderer, Lydia Keats. This occurs at her riverside apartment in Chelsea. She offers no resistance until she suddenly breaks down and starts to rave - and is later pronounced insane. The police surgeon attributes her condition to 'delusions of greatness' (Chapter 26).

Of all the suspects in the case, perhaps in the end the only untarnished ones are Christine's husband, Lord Champneis (pronounced Chins), and her reputed lover, Jason Harmer. These two men, in fact, turn out to have collaborated on the very night of the murder to smuggle into the country a Jewish refugee and political leader from the Continent, one Rimnik (Chapter 26).

In sum, the novel paints a sprawling social canvas, many of whose details, except the political ones, are boiled down by the film to enrich its own climax set in the Grand Hotel. (The political situation on the Continent would be implied a year later in Hitchcock's next film, **The Lady Vanishes**.) Some of the details make for recognisable-enough borrowings, such as the way the novel's Marine Hotel may have suggested the seaside setting (Falmouth? Folkestone?) of the hotel in the film. That setting, of course, allows the film to arrive full-circle from the clifftop scene at the start. But the matter is still not exactly simple. In changing the hotel's name, and in emphasising the insouciance of its staff and patrons, the film provides an equivalent to how the novel depicts Christine's circle of theatrical friends, from Marta Hallard to Lydia Keats. To some extent, **everyone** in that circle has suffered 'delusions of greatness'.

In fact, only Christine herself, among her friends and acquaintances, had approached even remotely the stature of a Greta Garbo. So the Grand Hotel setting (recalling the title of Garbo's 1932 film) manages both to evoke Christine's memory and to make a comment on the people who have now gathered here, most of them oblivious of the latest life-and-death drama they're about to witness - though exactly as in a theatre (the tea-room dance-floor and the orchestra platform). Note the haughty looks several of the hotel staff give Will and Erica when they first arrive. By the scene's end, when Robert will have joined them, those three will be heroes. And Christine's husband will have been 'exposed' as a villain ...

* * *

To properly grasp this very Hitchcockian situation, we should consider the person I've just called a villain. In fact, this once-proud man, who had rescued his wife from the chorus, and who has now become a nonentity himself, is a compound of practically all the outsiders (**qua** outsiders) in the novel. By such a designation I include the Jew with the 'sleepy expression', Jason Harmer (cf in the film the drummer's black-face and twitching eyes), and even the novel's husband who is specifically **not** a murderer (but who secretly engages in nocturnal escapades to rescue Jewish refugees). In addition, there's Christine's ne'er-do-well brother, who ends up disguised as a monk in Canterbury and who wears a look of hate (such as we see cross the drummer's face); there's the generally mediocre seeress, Lydia Keats, who feels a compulsion to confess in public and who goes mad (like the drummer); and there's Jammy Hopkins's boss, 'Old Man' Willingdon, who perversely allows his reporter to write about the time he beat up his wife. (Note that the drummer is repeatedly called 'old man', thereby sounding a further note of pathos in a film about triumphant youth.) And of course the novel describes a critical moment when Robert, exonerated at last, starts to **drum** upon the kitchen table and to **laugh uncontrollably** (as does the film's drummer when accused of killing his wife).

The fact that in the film both Robert and Erica, and Christine's husband, go on the run, ending up together at the suitably 'theatrical' Grand Hotel, is vital to the 'levelling' purpose of the film I remarked earlier. Without exception, everyone in the film wants - or wills - the same thing; and the theatrical occasion is its ideal representation. By the same token, a lesson of the film is that the representation is not the thing itself, nor does it last - no more than does the summer, or youth or (for that matter) the experience of viewing the film in front of us. In turn, what seems likely is that **everyone** in the film is 'deluded'. In Hitchcock, there are **no** untarnished characters, even if some of them, like Erica, are still young enough to retain vestiges of their original innocence.

Well, there's also a higher innocence. For Schopenhauer, it could be attained by those rare individuals who somehow manage to repudiate the Will by turning it back upon itself, thereby achieving an ethical transcendence. No doubt the experience of life itself - which is usually, of course, an **extended** experience - is the best teacher of this most important of all lessons. Yet Schopenhauer acknowledged

that some works of art might also teach it, or at least give glimpses of what higher innocence is like. I dare say Hitchcock's film is such a work. Earlier, I stressed its ongoing motif (not unconnected with its very movement or flow) whereby both Robert and Erica are repeatedly being 'exposed' in public to fresh dangers, fresh exigencies. Whenever one of them attempted to hang back, and wait in the car with Towser, circumstances would soon intervene. Often the result was both exhilarating and painful (as at Tom's Hat). You could say that such 'exposure' represents part of the learning process, the most obvious and 'theatrical' part. Yet equally important, if paradoxical, is how during the film both Erica and Robert, and Christine's husband, must still try **not** to star in their own drama, i.e. try to avoid being recognised. There lies another learning experience, and another vital one. In other words, proper 'modesty' is just as educative as public 'exposure'. Hitchcock once described the typical double-chase situation of his films as allowing the audience to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare. It's the same idea, merely a different (binary) metaphor.

Let's return to the Grand Hotel. To my point in 'MacGuffin' 10, that various Hitchcock films climax in a theatre or other public space, I there added the observation that the respective villains have typically spent the films either 'rendered mute or ... denied access to any form of public platform, or ... forced to shun "exposure" altogether'. Christine Clay's husband fits this pattern, and perhaps almost the only difference in the end between him and Robert (who may have been Christine's gigolo, remember) lies in the grave and irrevocable nature of his particular crime. Plus the fact that he no longer has access to one half of the educative life-process I've just described, i.e. the 'theatrical' half. I take it that he joined the minstrel band as some sort of substitute, as well as refuge: interestingly, this would seem to parallel Theodore Price's reading of another of Hitchcock's 'theatrical' films, **I Confess** (1953), which also ends beside a stage, and in which the leading character (according to Price) had joined the Church as a refuge from his homosexuality ...[28]

* * *

In this final scene, Hitchcock fully plays up the theatrical nature of the occasion, availing himself of touches he would have found in the novel's description of Lydia Keats's public talk attended by Jammy Hopkins. The people at the talk, with their various reasons for being there, correspond to the different groups listening to the minstrel band at the thé-dansant. Jammy himself, observing Lydia's audience, has a counterpart in Hitchcock's camera - whose showy crane-shot is particularly 'theatrical'.[29] And the novel's business of 'the watcher watched' (or 'the seer seen') has further equivalents in the film, particularly in the business of the policeman watching Erica and Will who are looking out for someone else - who then sees them before they see him ...

Also, just as the meeting in the London hall falls into roughly two halves, consisting of Lydia's talk followed by questions, so Hitchcock divides the thé-dansant scene into two sections, with an 'intermission' separating them. Naturally, he takes the opportunity provided by that lull to go 'behind the scenes', showing both the arrival of Erica's father (to whom Robert turns himself in, to save Erica further embarrassment) and the drummer popping pills (with the bizarre explanation, 'this twitch is getting on my nerves').[30]

Each of these details helps build suspense - which is palpable Will (cf 'MacGuffin' 10). Indeed, it's hard to separate the scene's 'theatricality' from the satisfying and even erotic aspect of suspense/Will (ibid). Hitchcock needs us to feel a mounting tension if only to understand by empathy the drummer's condition, which has already begun to show itself in his 'immodest' percussion. Importantly, Hitchcock takes care not to break that tension until he's ready. That's one reason why he has Erica and Will, our identification-figures in the scene, join in with the dancers for a once-around the floor. And why, even when the drummer's mad cadenzas begin to draw people's attention to him, these sound just intentional enough to leave us wondering, 'Did he mean that, or not?'

The drummer's final collapse, and 'exposure'/arrest, provide a kind of parody of the notion of rapturous death - which, in turn, isn't far removed from those parodies of 'nirvana' which I've previously detected in **Murder!** (1930), **Suspicion** (1941), **Psycho**, etc. (See, in particular, 'MacGuffin' 10.) In this connection, let's not forget the eloquent image of the ocean in the film's opening scene, never directly referred to thereafter. In Hitchcock, the sea inevitably carries a connotation of Will, and true nirvana entails becoming at one with it through a cessation of individual willing. So it's interesting that **Blue**

Velvet contains a comparable image, or so critic Danny Peary might convince us. He notes of Lynch's film how its memorable early close-up, of a severed human ear, is 'accompanied by sound effects (by Alan Splet) of what may be brain waves or the roar of the ocean one hears when listening to a seashell'. And he sees in this image - the camera tracks right into the ear's dark interior - Jeffrey Beaumont's 'passageway from young innocent to far-from-innocent adult'.[31]

So here are some final thoughts. With its generally innocuous surface, **Young and Innocent** prefigures Hitchcock's ironic depiction of small-town America in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943), which is an obvious model for **Blue Velvet**. With this difference. In **Shadow of a Doubt**, depravity comes to town in the person of the charming, dandified serial-killer called Uncle Charlie; in **Blue Velvet**, the town breeds its own depravity, as exemplified by the vicious, possibly bisexual, gangster called Frank Booth.[32] (In Lynch's film, it's young Jeffrey who comes to town.) Nevertheless, Hitchcock's film uses the metaphor of wartime to imply the real problem: namely, what the detective Jack Graham calls in the film's last shot, a world that 'Seems to go crazy every now and then'. **Blue Velvet** settles for Jeffrey's reference to a world that's 'strange'.

Now, **Young and Innocent**, like both **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Blue Velvet**, ends with smiles all round. **Its** last shot stands in for the novel's entire final chapter (Chapter 27) in which Erica invites home for a celebratory meal both the detective on the case, Inspector Grant (a father-figure, on whom Erica seems to retain a crush), and Robert (who seems to have his own crush, on Erica). In the film, she simply smiles from Robert to her father. Meanwhile, the drummer has been led away, now quite mad and seemingly already half-forgotten. But Erica is an intelligent girl, like the niece of Uncle Charlie (she who marries the detective Jack) and young Sandy (a detective's daughter). It's not likely that any of these girls will be unchanged by what they've seen in their respective films. Or, henceforth, will remain altogether innocent, in even the most profound sense of that word. For them, too, the learning process has well and truly begun.

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Notes

1. Chabrol was interviewed for a recent documentary on Herrmann, co=produced by Channel Four (Britain) and Films d'ici (France).

2. Hence he told Truffaut that 'Directors who lose control are concerned with the abstract'.

3. Cited by Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992), p. xviv.

4. Ibid.

5. See the review there (pp. 3-7) of Steven C. Smith's 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann'. The term 'Under-nature', though, is A.P. Rossiter's, and I've borrowed it from Robin Wood's essay on **Rear Window** in 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989).

6. See 'An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock', translated in James Naremore (ed.), 'North by Northwest' (1993), p. 179.

7. These categories represent Schopenhauer's simplification of Kant. Cf my comment on Hugo Münsterberg's use of them, when I reviewed S.S. Prawer's 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' in 'MacGuffin' 2, pp. 3-5.

8. Naremore, p. 179.

9. George Perry, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1965), p. 61.

10. Programme note on **Young and Innocent** in National Film Theatre's 'Critic's Choice' brochure (to accompany a season of films, February-March 1964), p. 5.

11. Cf the novel, Chapter 12 (and passim). An obvious parallel, too, is with how the heroine of Hitchcock's **Marnie** comes in time to transfer her affection from her horse, Forio - killed after a hunting accident - to her husband, Mark.

12. That it was a **coal** mine (and not, say, a Cornish **tin** mine) is according to the account of **Young and Innocent** given in Harris & Lasky, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1976), p. 64.

13. The film gives Erica a female 'Oedipus complex' just as it gives Robert the fairly conventional male itinerary of finding a woman who will be to him both 'mother' and 'mistress'. For a (very sophisticated) discussion of how in **Blue Velvet** Frank and Jeffrey are alike in desiring 'to be both son and father', see Barbara Creed, 'A Journey Through **Blue Velvet**: Film, Fantasy and the Female Spectator', in 'New Formations', No. 6, Winter 1988, pp. 97-117, especially p. 113. If I read Creed's article (and the film) aright, the underlying itinerary in **Blue Velvet** is one of overcoming **all** sexual difference, 'of closing the gap between masculine and feminine' (p. 114). But then, that's arguably a Hitchcockian theme, too. See my discussion of **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Blue Velvet** at the end of the present article, and cf my review of Theodore Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', in 'MacGuffin' 12.

14. Cf the moment early in **Vertigo** when Scottie collapses off the kitchen stool against Midge's bosom (see 'MacGuffin' 11) - though **that** moment, I grant you, is hardly ambiguous at all, given the (phallic) nature of Scottie's main quest ...

15. Cf the blind Philip Martin in Hitchcock's **Saboteur** (1942).

16. 'Critic's Choice' brochure, op. cit, p. 5. A typical Berry story in this respect, involving much dashing about the countryside under a summer's sky, is 'How Will Noggin Was Fooled ... in 'Berry and Co' (1921).

17. Flora Macdonald, of course, helped Bonnie Prince Charlie elude his English pursuers ...

18. See the novel, Chapter 14.

19. This theme really emerges later in the film, where it applies most obviously (and naturally) to the wealthy characters. As for Hitchcock's depiction of Erica's Aunt Mary in the present scene, consider this. A recent news item noted how frequently people write from Tunbridge Wells to conservative newspapers (e.g. London's 'Daily Telegraph') and sign their letters 'Disgusted'. Surely Aunt Mary epitomises such people, and Hitchcock is having some sly fun at her expense!

20. The art director on many Gaumont films of the 1930s, including **Young and Innocent**, was Alfred Junge, formerly of UFA in Germany.

21. Actor Derrick de Marney was 30 (though he looks younger) when the film was made; Nova Pilbeam was a sweet 17. As in **Number Seventeen** (see 'MacGuffin' 5), there's at least a faint suggestion of cradle-snatching!

22. Although the credits of **Young and Innocent** list Alma Reville (Mrs Hitchcock) as co-scenarist, her official collaborator on the script, Charles Bennett, says that she 'never did a damned thing' on either this picture or any of the other Hitchcock pictures he wrote, such as **The 39 Steps**. Bennett hastens to add that Alma 'was one of the most wonderful people in the world' whom he, Bennett, 'adored' - but that even her nominal 'continuity' function on Hitchcock's pictures was just a salary dodge, justified by the fact that Hitchcock's careful pre-planning and economy of shooting obviated the need for a continuity person at all ... See Pat McGilligan (ed.), 'Backstory: Interviews With Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age' (1986), p. 27.

23. Nevertheless, the **Young and Innocent** party scene may perhaps call to mind such a well-known article as Joseph Luft's 'The Johari window: a graphic model of awareness in group relations', in Cathcart & Samovar, 'Small group Communications: A reader' (1984), pp. 29-57 ...

24. Cf Perry, p. 61.

25. Remember that the 'innocent' Erica, by contrast, is associated with daytime and sunshine.

26. Cf the 'swamp of boredom' in which Jeffries finds himself at the start of **Rear Window**. Still, perhaps there's a sense in which Erica's present travail corresponds more nearly to Bunyan's Doubting Castle or even Valley of the Shadow of Death. Be that as it may, **Young and Innocent also** seems to say that the world has its Vanity Fair aspect ... For the (indirect?) influence of Bunyan on Hitchcock, see my review of Robert Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation', in the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 110-11 and pp. 115-16 (notes 22 and 23), as well as my review of Naremore, op. cit., in this 'MacGuffin'. Also, let's note that Richard Usborne, 'Clubland Heroes' (1983), p. 71, says that Dornford Yates's writing style in the 'Chandos' thrillers was often Bunyanesque ...

27. Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's British Films' (1977), p. 221.

28. However, there the character is certainly redeemed, like Robert in **Young and Innocent**, and the film's villain who dies at the end is a **political** refugee and murderer/blackmailer (and possible homosexual, although he's married), who has been working as a sexton in the priest's own church. See my review of Price's 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' in 'MacGuffin' 12.

29. Strictly, Hitchcock's camera corresponds to Josephine Tey's prose, as Jammy's report of Lydia's talk is given in the third person, not directly ...

30. In my review of Hitchcock's **Stage Fright** in 'MacGuffin' 2, I referred to how some modern philosophers like Gilbert Ryle believe that mind and body are indistinguishable, that the mind is part of the body's activity and not a separate, independent entity ...

31. Danny Peary, 'Cult Movies Three' (1988), p. 39.

32. Cf note 13 above. Note that neither Uncle Charlie nor Frank Booth is married, though both 'invade' a typical nuclear family and usurp the father's place (in Frank's case, by actual murder). In **Young and Innocent**, by contrast, Robert matures during the course of the film from 'boy' to man, and is finally acknowledged by a smiling Colonel Burgoyne as his heir-apparent ...

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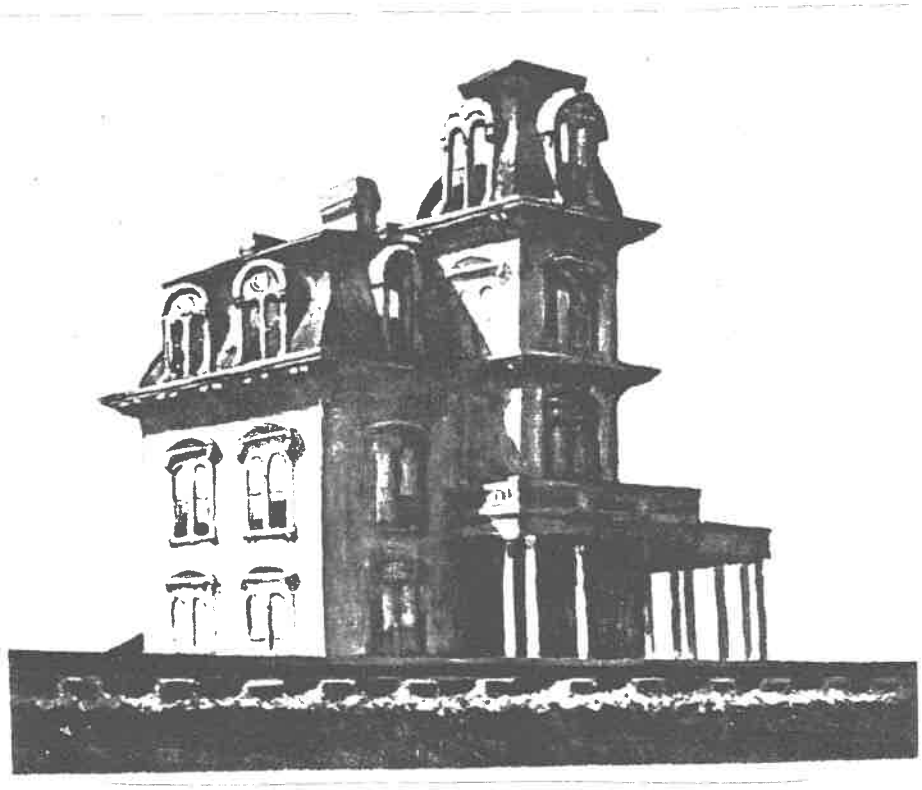

'House by the Railroad' by Edward Hopper (1882-1967)

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Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **The Paradine Case** (no. 12), **Vertigo** (11), Adrian Martin on **Notorious** (10), Evan Williams on **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). These are the issues most recommended! Earlier, there were issues on **Suspicion** (7), **The Wrong Man** plus Charles Barr on Hitchcock's British Period (6), **Number Seventeen** (5), **Psycho** (4), **The Lodger** (3), **Stage Fright** (2), and **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** (1). The next 'MacGuffin' will print a detailed Table of Contents for issues 9-12.

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ODD SPOT: TO CATCH ANOTHER THIEF

Daring burglar Steven Paul Thompson, 24, was dubbed by Queensland police 'Spiderman' because his favourite modus operandi involved his scaling the outside of luxury high-rise apartments on the Gold and Sunshine coasts.

Thompson was recently gaoled for twenty years after confessing to an Australian record 2,289 offences. A Brisbane court heard that he used no equipment during the burglaries, and climbed the multi-storey buildings using only hands and feet.

The police might equally have called him 'The Cat', given the similarity of his crimes to those carried out on the French Riviera in 1950 by a young man named Dario Sambucco. Sambucco's story was fictionalised by author David Dodge in his 1953 novel 'To Catch a Thief', which in turn was filmed two years later by Alfred Hitchcock, with Cary Grant as 'Le chat'.

Footnote. Up to $2.95 million worth (Australian) of the Spiderman's loot still hasn't been recovered.

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'The MacGuffin' is the newsletter (so-called) of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock SIG (Special Interest Group), authorised by Australian Mensa. This issue was printed by TS Press, Collingwood, Victoria. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, cheques, etc. should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 14 November 1994 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5 £3

EDITORIAL

'Woman', wrote Baudelaire, 'is the opposite of the dandy. Therefore she must inspire horror. ... Woman is **natural**, that is to say abominable.'

This 'MacGuffin' explores both aspects of Baudelaire's dictum. On woman as inspiring horror, we have a review of Dr Barbara Creed's analysis of the modern horror movie, 'The Monstrous-Feminine'. One of Creed's findings concerns how woman is often seen as threatening, due to male fears about loss of virility. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Creed discusses such concepts as the 'devouring' mother and the 'castrating' femme fatale, the latter armed with her deadly **vagina dentata**.

But further, woman is often seen as particularly monstrous, or 'abominable', because of her procreative associations, i.e. her links to what Camille Paglia calls a 'realm of fluids where objects dissolve'. Paglia adds that all art is 'a flight from liquidity', but Dr Creed manages to suggest that horror films may be a special case: they positively delight in piling on the gore or the bile or the menstrual flow (as in **Psycho** or **The Exorcist** or **Carrie**). Yet in each instance, Creed believes, woman is the loser for being shown in such a light.

Certainly, a characteristic of the dandy is his **contempt** for all that's natural, including Mother Nature herself. Professor Thomas Elsaesser, writing herein on 'The Dandy in Hitchcock', quotes Oscar Wilde about that: 'Nature has good intentions, of course, but ... she cannot carry them out. When I look at a landscape I cannot help seeing all its defects.'

Now, someone else who may have felt that way was Hitchcock - one of the most **artful** of filmmakers. Elsaesser convincingly shows that Hitchcock's studied persona contained many traits of the dandy: for instance, his special brand of wit, his capacity to be outrageous. For my part, I would perhaps question just one of Elsaesser's points: his suggestion that some of Hitchcock's (nominal) heroes are themselves dandies. Aren't the latter confined in Hitchcock to his (nominal) villains, such as Uncle Charlie in **Shadow of a Doubt** and the, admittedly charming, Hon. Charles Adare in **Under Capricorn**? Mind you, perhaps those characters are the films' true heroes, after all ...

'The MacGuffin' is honoured to have Professor Elsaesser as a contributor this time. I shan't begin to list his publications, which are no doubt familiar to many of our readers. Professor Elsaesser teaches in the Film and Television Department at the University of Amsterdam.

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. Librarians and others please note. This issue contains a contents-index for issues 9-12.

LETTERS

Derek Holmes, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia

Much has been made of the 'doubles' motif in **Strangers on a Train** (1951) - I don't know if it's been noted before but there are **two** ice cubes in each of the **two** doubles that Bruno Anthony orders in the opening of the film! But what of the 'triples' motif?

When Guy Haines finally becomes pro-active rather than reactive and seeks to vanquish his double, a series of triples enters the film. In order to confront Bruno at the fairground he must try and win his tennis match in three sets. He carries three rackets onto the court whereas in the opening of the film he carried two rackets. His blazer pocket also contains a 'triple' motif: a plume dividing two crossed rackets. The crossed rackets of the lighter ('From A to G') are now under threat as Guy endeavours to break his double's hold on him. Finally, in order to make his escape Guy needs the help of both Ann **and** Barbara Morton. Three people now know the truth and between them they elude the two detectives so Guy can catch his cab to happier horizons.

(Editor's note. Coincidentally, the 'doubles' aspect of **Strangers on a Train** has been neatly summarised by Thomas Elsaesser in his article called 'The Dandy in Hitchcock', printed in this issue. But what of the 'triples' motif, indeed?

Here are some thoughts. In 'MacGuffin' 10, we noted that some other Hitchcock climaxes - of **The Lady Vanishes** (1938) and **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956 version) - demonstrate that identical lesson that two heads may be better than one, and three better still. In other words, concerted action is usually better than divided action or inaction! Further, the typical Hitchcock climax refers to a wider-world that hitherto has been excluded. So it's fitting that Guy's tennis match at the climax of **Strangers on a Train** by no means goes according to (his) plan: instead of having a customary easy victory in three straight sets, he's actually extended to **five** sets (or two **extra** sets).

I'm not sure what to make of the plume dividing two crossed rackets on Guy's blazer. Perhaps it sounds a note of chivalry: you think of the climax Hitchcock wanted for **Topaz** (1969), involving an old-fashioned duel. It also seems to refer to Kipling's 'Triumph and Disaster', those opposing aspects of fickle fortune cited elsewhere in the Forest Hills scene ...

In a way, of course, the very net in a game of tennis introduces an additional **third** element beyond the two players in their respective courts. Here you may think of the memorable scene quite early in the film where Bruno watches only Guy, while everyone else watches both Guy **and** his on-court opponent. (Hitchcock clearly developed this scene from one in the 1948 British film, **Quartet.**) In turn, perhaps we should recall what Hitchcock said about taking the camera outside Jeff's apartment in **Rear Window** (1954): 'You can't afford to be too rigorous about following these so-called "rules".')

* * *

Michael Campi, Dingley, Victoria, Australia

Nothing had really prepared me for the thrill of seeing Hitchcock's **Dial M for Murder** (1954) in 3D. In the flat version, certain effects are obviously prepared for a greater depth of visual field, but when you see the film in 3D nearly every shot takes on another significance. I hadn't previously been so aware of how much the characters are **entwining** themselves, particularly around Margot (Grace Kelly). The choreography of the actors is a joy to watch.

* * *

Jay Giswein, Highland Park, California, USA

I enjoyed reading 'MacGuffin' 13 and was particularly interested in the reference by one of your Australian readers to his 'Top Ten Hitchcocks'. Here's mine: 1. **Strangers on a Train.** 2. **North by**

Northwest. 3. **Notorious**. 4. **Psycho**. 5. **Vertigo**. 6. **Rope**. 7. **Lifeboat**. 8. **Dial M for Murder**. 9. **Rebecca**. 10. **The Birds**.

* * *

Bill Routt, Balwyn, Victoria, Australia

Recently I read a very interesting book by Nick Land on the French thinker Georges Bataille ('The Thirst for Annihilation', 1992, published by Routledge). In it, Land deals effectively with old Artie Schopenhauer and points out how neglected his work has been. Of course, I thought of you.

(Editor's note. For new readers, I should explain that every issue of 'The MacGuffin' so far has pointed to some similarity or other between Schopenhauer's thought and an aspect of Hitchcock's films. And a point of trivia: a photograph of the German thinker in his old age provided the model for the appearance of the title-character, played by Werner Krauss, in **The Cabinet of Dr Caligari**, 1919!)

* * *

Ed Buscombe, BFI Publishing, London, England

The British Film Institute monographs are among our best sellers and several of them have been reprinted. BFI books are now distributed in Australia by Peribo of Sydney. We hope this will greatly increase availability.

I don't know quite how arcane you like your Hitchcockiana to be, but there is a brief discussion of Hitch's direction of an episode of **Elstree Calling** (1930) in our recent publication 'Walking Shadows: Shakespeare in the National Film and Television Archive'.

(Editor's note. Ed Buscombe is referring to Hitch's short burlesque of 'The Taming of the Shrew'. Elsewhere in his letter, replying to one of mine, Ed mentions that he still hopes that Tim Hunter will write the BFI monograph on **Vertigo**. 'But he is taking his time.')

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Thanks, Liz

Elizabeth Taylor has unsuccessfully sued a publisher and a producer of an intended TV mini-series over the release next May of a Taylor biography. Several years ago, the actress registered her name as a trademark and service mark in the US and 'most of the industrial nations of the world'. But now Judge Diane Wayne of the Los Angeles Superior Court has given official permission for the book and mini-series to proceed. Taylor's lawsuit, the judge said, was 'an unconstitutional prior restraint against expression protected by the First Amendment'.

Meanwhile, the attorneys representing the estate of Alfred Hitchcock, who say the estate owns 'all rights to publicity regarding Mr Hitchcock, as well as having trademark rights ...', have quietly dropped an action of their own. It looks as if they found out that the 'Hitchcock Annual', now in its third year, really is a respectable academic-type publication, along the lines of the 'Dickens Studies Annual', and that it isn't in the business of selling Hitchcock T-shirts ...

New publications

The 1994 'Hitchcock Annual' includes articles on **Psycho**, **Vertigo**, **Rear Window** and **Bon Voyage** and **Aventure Malgache**; Hitchcock himself talks about the music heard in **Waltzes from Vienna**; there's a complete shot-list with dialogue of **Number Seventeen** (now you can check what is said in the inaudible parts of many currently-available prints); and there are reviews of several new film books, only one of which is actually on Hitchcock. We'll review the 'Annual' in our next issue. Meanwhile, write for a subscription to P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022. Subscription rates in US dollars are: Individuals $7 one year; $12 two years. Institutions $10 one year; $17 two years. Outside the US: $9 individuals; $12 institutions.

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Back in print is the classic little book of photographs by Philippe Halsman, 'Dali's Moustache' (128 pp.). Dali co-operated on the book with Halsman, his good friend, and posed for dozens of shots which have a typically surreal flavour. All of them show Dali's famous lovingly waxed handlebar moustache - for instance, pierced with flowers to celebrate Mother's Day.

Alfred Hitchcock probably enjoyed this book, first published in 1954. He shared some of Dali's impish sense of humour - as Halsman found when he first met the director on assignment in 1962 to do shots of **The Birds**. Thereafter, Hitchcock and Halsman kept up a friendly personal and professional relationship. In some photo sessions, particularly those of a humorous kind, Hitchcock would direct the shots himself, delighting in coming up with ideas to at least equal Halsman's. However, the idea of photographing Hitch taking a bubble bath was definitely Halsman's own - he saw it as 'a marvellous satire on Hollywood'. Regrettably, it was never shot because, at the last minute, Universal Studios vetoed it. Or that was Hitchcock's story. Halsman suspects that the director may have suddenly had cold feet.

*

The script of Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel's famous 1928 short, **Un Chien Andalou/ The Andalusian Dog**, whose influence you may detect in Hitchcock's **Spellbound** (1945), is available in English (38 pp.) from the Electric Shadows Bookshop, Canberra City, ACT 2601. Also on the latest Electric Shadows list is 'The Woody Allen Companion' (427 pp.), compiled by Stephen Spignesi. We haven't yet seen it, but would bet that the section on 'philosophers who have influenced him' includes reference to Arthur Schopenhauer! (We've heard that there's an academic in Oregon who has done considerable work on the Schopenhauer-Allen connection.) By the way, our thanks to Electric Shadows for carrying stock of 'The MacGuffin' this issue.

*

Here's something different. In 1945, Alfred Hitchcock was hired by ABC Radio in the US to produce a new mystery series. For some reason, only the pilot show, a half-hour dramatisation of Francis Iles's 1931 novel, 'Malice Aforethought', was made. Hitchcock both directed and narrated it, in a rather facetious tone. (The story is about a philandering doctor who poisons his wife.) Later, he told Truffaut that he'd often wanted to film the novel, but that he'd had to be content with making just **Suspicion** (1941), adapted from Iles's 1932 'Before the Fact'.

Well, Hitchcock fans will be happy to hear that the radio programme has now been unearthed, and is available on audio-cassette. It costs $5.50 US, and is available from Milestone Film and Video, 275 West 96th Street, Suite 28C, New York, NY 10025. Overseas customers should no doubt add a suitable amount for postage.

Film tribute to Dorothy Parker (1863-1967)

Appropriately, a film of Dorothy Parker's life has one of this year's wittiest titles: **Miss Parker and the Vicious Circle**. It stars Jennifer Jason Leigh as the American poet, short-story writer and drama critic whose sometimes caustic reviews could close shows on Broadway in the first week.

In the same year, 1942, that Parker's 'Collected Stories' was published, Alfred Hitchcock employed her to provide business and additional dialogue for **Saboteur**. But as Hitchcock later pointed out, some of her touches in the film went almost literally over people's heads - as when a midget answers the circus-caravan door and at first Barry (Robert Cummings) and Patricia (Priscilla Lane) fail to see anyone. The nickname given the midget by his fellow circus-freaks is another Parkerism - 'the Major' - and his quarrel with the thin man has a faintly surreal absurdity, worthy of Jean Vigo's 1933 **Zero de Conduite**.

Australian Film Awards, 1994

Two offbeat comedies - **Muriel's Wedding** and **Bad Boy Bubby** - shared top honours in this year's Australian Film Institute awards. Best film was voted to be **Muriel's Wedding** (d. Paul Hogan), whose main character is a fat girl desperate for a husband. But **Bad Boy Bubby**, about a man who spends his first 35 years kept locked in his room by his mother, won both Best Direction and Best Original Screenplay awards for Rolf de Heer. Largely ignored by the judges was the popular 'drag comedy', Stephan Elliott's **The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert**.

Departures

We regret to record the recent deaths of such notable Hitchcock-collaborators as writer-director Sidney Gilliat, writer-producer Joan Harrison (Mrs Eric Ambler), actress Jessica Tandy (Mrs Hume Cronyn) and writer Robert Bloch.

A special word here about Sidney Gilliat. He was, of course, a long-time partner in writing, and later producing/directing, with Frank Launder. Their first joint film script was for Albert de Courville's **Seven Sinners** (1936), but it was their script for Hitchcock's **The Lady Vanishes** (1938) that gained them an enduring reputation for comedy-thriller writing.

In 1943, Gilliat and Launder made their directorial debut with the excellent wartime propaganda feature, **Millions Like Us**, a warm-hearted study of women factory workers. On this they shared a directing credit but subsequently they took turns to direct while continuing to work together on screenplays. A 'Hitchcockian' touch informed many of their films, including **Green for Danger** (1946) and **State Secret** (1950). Gilliat's solo masterpiece is often said to be **Only Two Can Play** (1962), starring Peter Sellers.

It's also clear that Hitchcock continued to watch and be influenced by Gilliat and Launder's work into the '40s and beyond. For instance, there are traces of **Seven Sinners** in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940) and **Saboteur** (1942), and the titles-sequence of Hitchcock's **Frenzy** (1972) pays homage to Gilliat's **London Belongs to Me** (1948).

British Film SIG Moves Ahead

Under the new editorship of Wilson Fraser, the newsletter of the British Mensa Film SIG has changed its name from 'Zoetrope' to 'Moving Pictures'.

Wilson's own film interests, ranging from film comedy to the work of sexploitation director Russ Meyer (particularly Meyer's earlier films), are reflected in the magazine, much of which is written by Wilson himself. (Does that last sound familiar?)

Wilson has sent us a letter in which he agrees that novelist Leslie Charteris was a bit of a hack, though he finds this surprising since Charteris was a member of Mensa!

No doubt, our respective SIGs will keep exchanging information, as in the past. May 'Moving Pictures' be a big success, Wilson.

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BOOK REVIEW

Creed, Barbara: 'The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis' (Routledge: London and New York, 1993; 182pp, pb)

> [I]t is to the unconscious that the horror film speaks, revealing - perhaps more than any other genre - the unconscious fears and desires of both the human subject (pain, bodily attack, disintegration, death) and the gendered subject (male fears of woman's reproductive role and of castration and woman's fears of phallic aggressivity and rape).
>
> - Barbara Creed, 'The Monstrous-Feminine', p. 156

> Woman's body is a labyrinth in which man is lost. It is a walled garden, the mediaeval **hortus conclusus**, in which nature works its daemonic sorcery. Woman is the primeval fabricator, the real First Mover. She turns a gob of refuse into a spreading web of sentient being, floating on the snaky umbilical by which she leashes every man.
>
> - Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (1991), p. 12

> You can't help noticing how mechanical and frigid even the best academic criticism looks alongside the most talented impressionistic prose.
>
> - Peter Matthews, in 'Sight and Sound', August 1993, p. 36

If you see an obviously demented person approaching you with a raised knife or switched-on chainsaw, do you stay around? Typically, the modern 'slasher' movie asks that you do just that - and suffer the consequences. Thus it manipulates both your fear of being hurt - or of being otherwise indisposed - and your flight instinct, two things so basic that you share them with other sentient beings. That seems clear enough. But now, what if your fear, and your sense of intrepid purpose, combine to induce in you their respective forms of **paralysis**, of staying put? I suggest that it's here that **horror**, a relatively cerebral thing, as opposed to **terror**, starts to occur.

But before we get into psychoanalysis, let's note how 'aesthetic' matters may also affect our response to horror films. Take the rule that tells filmmakers - even genre filmmakers - to 'avoid the cliché'. Here, I find it significant that my own two most delicious moments of film-horror came during a first viewing of, respectively, Hitchcock's **Psycho** (1960) and Nicholas Roeg's **Don't Look Now** (1973). In the case of the latter, set mainly in a wintry Venice, I still feel shock when a weeping 'child' in a red mackintosh, who has drawn the architect John (Donald Sutherland) into a blind alley or courtyard, turns around and shows herself to be a hideous dwarf, armed with a knife. Note that after John, transfixed, has met his end, the film cuts to his coffin being borne along a canal - whereupon the viewer has time to ponder the full horror of these events, a horror which would be less if the killer had been just your average thug.

Also, Roeg, inspired no doubt by Daphne du Maurier's artful novella (1970), has prepared us for the horror by literally, as well as figuratively, leading us up the garden path. I'll describe the scene's figurative aspects shortly. By the literal aspects, I mean the more visceral ploys with which the scene helps us share John's mad hope that this scurrying Little-Red-Riding-Hood figure may restore his young daughter, who had drowned while wearing a similar red outfit. Of course, we know that he's asking the impossible, whatever the scene's evocative images and sounds, which in turn echo earlier moments. And so, what for an instant had seemed like John's second chance of happiness, does in fact come to its horrifying end - a dénouement all the more cruel for the rising and then plummeting dramatic curve.

As for the scene's figurative aspects, these notably include reference to John's Catholicism. The novella ends with his words, 'God, what a bloody silly way to die.' The film doesn't have that multiple pun, but the punning **spirit** is everywhere. And the force of the word 'silly' can be felt in the film's emphasis on John's failure to heed his gifts of second-sight and telepathy. Also, he fails to heed the warning given him by an old blind lady, one of two sisters, who urge him and his wife Laura (Julie Christie) to leave Venice. That's a reason why his death at the end of a **blind** alley is ironic. But

there are related reasons. Venice, the film tells us, was a city beloved by the poet John Milton - before **he** became blind. And, in fact, there does seem to be a contrast implied in the film between the deaths of the two Johns, respectively inglorious and fulfilled. It's pertinent to recall that after Milton became blind, he turned to writing both 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained'.

I've spelt all this out for a couple of reasons. As I'll describe later, a similar set of ironies informs **Psycho**. Also, I needed to show that the satisfactions offered by **Don't Look Now** - not to speak of **Psycho** - are far from being just 'psychoanalytic' ones. Now I can come to what I've found in 'The Monstrous-Feminine'.

* * *

Venice is your quintessential Lost Paradise city, as noted in 'MacGuffin' 12. Hence, when I said above that Roeg leads us up the garden path, I was implying what is perhaps his film's most central irony of all. It's been an incidental pleasure of reading Dr Creed's book, as well as Professor Paglia's 'Sexual Personae', that both authors discuss the sort of link between traditional images of Paradise and notions of a woman's body that Hitchcock sometimes implied (**vide**: the theme of the Fatal Woman in **The Paradine Case**, 1947).[1] Creed reports, for instance, that the Cretans 'thought of the garden of paradise as the Goddess's womb in which a serpent dwelt' (p. 64, citing H.R. Hays). And certainly, as John traverses the byways of watery Venice in **Don't Look Now**, you can imagine him reliving memories or phantasies of the interior of his mother's body, especially the womb. In his misguided way, he's looking for the Paradise he feels was denied him after his daughter died.[2]

Misguided - but what of 'silly'? Here, I take my cue from another of Creed's passing allusions, this time to the Little Red Riding Hood story (p. 108), where she tells us that the red riding hood stands for a woman's clitoris, and the wolf's devouring jaws (hidden under the hood) stand for the terrible **vagina dentata**, feared by men in art, myth and legend. Suddenly, John's relation to his dead daughter may be seen as having been potentially incestuous - much as, according to Creed, in **The Exorcist** (William Friedkin, 1973) there's a latent **mother**-daughter incest (see, in particular, p. 35). And the dwarf with her knife, like some other women in 'slasher' movies cited by Creed (e.g. **Play Misty for Me**, Clint Eastwood, 1971 - see p. 126), isn't at all your Freudian 'castrated' woman but rather the castrator. John's search has been both misguided **and** 'silly', indeed.

Further, I dare say that this female killer-dwarf may represent what celebrated theorist Julia Kristeva calls 'the abject', i.e. that which society rejects because it 'disturbs identity, system, order' (quoted in Creed, p. 8). As a feminist, Creed is particularly concerned in her book to show that, if women have traditionally been assigned an 'abject' place in patriarchal society - because, for example, their bodies menstruate - they nevertheless shouldn't be underestimated. That's also the 'message' of a film like Brian De Palma's **Carrie** (1976) - although I do think it says something about **Don't Look Now** that **it** manages to take an altogether broader, and richer, position than just a 'polemical' one.

Having said that, I'll state here my main dissatisfaction with Creed's own polemics, which I'll discuss in detail later. But here's what I think in a nutshell. With her psychoanalytic method, Creed may well seem to have penetrated to the hearts of her chosen films - rather like the stake that kills Count Dracula, who provides one of her choicest topics. But, in fact, I think she only occasionally brings the films alive - as all those post-menarche young women in female-vampire movies, also analysed by Creed, come alive. Films as artefacts, often ironic and ambiguous, hardly engage her. Which explains why it's only a **seeming** paradox that her chapter on 'the castrating mother' in **Psycho** is so disappointing. For Hitchcock, psychoanalysis was never more than one of many ingredients in his story-telling, and often one to be mocked, not reverenced.[3]

Also, consider the Creed and Paglia quotations that head this review. The first comes from the very end of Creed's book: I think it's the first and only acknowledgment the book makes that horror films are about anything **except** gender-based fears and concepts. By contrast, the second quotation comes at the start of Paglia's history of sexuality and decadence in the arts, and it summarises in a few lines what Creed spends chapters spelling out in relation to films like **Alien** (Ridley Scott, 1979), **The Exorcist**, **The Brood** (David Cronenberg, 1979), **The Hunger** (Tony Scott, 1983), **Carrie** and **Psycho**. What's significant about that for us is that Paglia thereby frees herself to range across and analyse many individual works,

as well as whole aesthetic trends, with a suggestiveness about how they might be fully experienced that is patently beyond the scope of 'The Monstrous-Feminine'.

* * *

'Woman's body', Paglia tells us, 'is a labyrinth in which man is lost.' As Creed shows, in her book's best chapter (Chapter 2), that's the very idea we're given by the design of the spaceship called 'Nostromo' in **Alien**. In fact, reminders of what Paglia calls woman as 'the primal fabricator', and Creed calls 'the archaic mother', are everywhere in **Alien**. Hereabouts, Creed doesn't miss a trick:

> She [the archaic mother] is there in the images of birth, the representations of the primal scene,[4] the womb-like imagery, the long winding tunnels leading to inner chambers, the rows of hatching eggs, the body of the mother-ship [with its vagina-like entrances], the voice of the life-support system [called 'Mother' by the crew], and the birth of the alien. (pp. 19-20)

The archaic mother, says Creed, taking her cue from Kristeva, represents 'the notion of the fecund mother-as-abyss that is central to **Alien**; it is the abyss, the cannibalizing black hole from which all life comes and to which all life returns that is represented in the film as a source of deepest terror' (p. 25). (Analysing **Psycho** in 'MacGuffin' 4, I noted how Norman Bates is finally swallowed up by his mother as if by 'a black hole'. I also noted how that film contrasts Marion Crane's lack of 'patience' to the poet John Milton's readiness to 'wait' - a theme similar to the one in **Don't Look Now**. More on these matters below.)

Creed further refers to the archaic mother as 'pre-phallic' (p. 20), which is not the same as 'pre-Oedipal' (p. 20) nor yet, I think, 'pre-symbolic' (p. 26). (Mind you, the difference for the film viewer is mostly 'academic', as they say.) For simplicity, I'll concentrate on the pre-phallic mother. This is 'the being who exists prior to knowledge of the phallus' (p. 20), i.e. the mother seen as omnipresent and all-powerful before the child's world, psychologically speaking, becomes gender-divided. Importantly, she is, in the words of Roger Dadoun, 'nothing but a fantasy' (quoted by Creed, p. 20) because she is conceived retrospectively - if I may so put it - and 'is only ever established as an omnipresent and all-powerful totality ... by the very intuition - she has no phallus - that deposes her ...' (quoted by Creed, p. 20). To see more exactly what this means, let's return to **Alien**.

As I've indicated, Creed is sometimes very theory-bound. Well, many critics have commented on how the alien in Ridley Scott's film resembles a penis. But when this creature emerges from the chest of its unfortunate 'host', the rather boyish John Hurt character called Kane, Creed sees only the 'birthing' aspect of the moment. In passing, then, let's note how that moment might equally be interpreted as depicting an 'unwanted' erection - a reading which certainly gains some weight from the director's comments about having mixed crews on long space missions: you'd then have a situation which would involve either 'neutralizing everyone and forbidding sex entirely, or ... having free "open sex" for whoever wants it'. (Quoted in Danny Peary, ed., 'Screen Flights/ Screen Fantasies', 1984, p. 295.)

But back to Creed. She implies that the omni-presence on the space voyage of the archaic mother gives rise (so to speak) to this 'fetishised' phallus: i.e. the alien can be read as the sign of a woman's 'lack', an understanding patriarchy is secretly happy to endorse. Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) does not, at the end of the film, destroy the alien, but at least she banishes it from the spacecraft and heads back home with her cat, a substitute fetish. Creed compares this 'acceptable' fetish to the love birds at the end of Hitchcock's 1963 **The Birds** (p. 24), a film loosely adapted from another Daphne du Maurier story.[5]

As a feminist, though, Creed is concerned to tell us that fetishism of whichever kind is still phallocentric. Even the cat is 'compensatory' or 'consoling' to Ripley, because it corresponds to a child, which in turn substitutes for the 'lost' penis. Such is the fairly orthodox Freudian reading of how a woman responds to her imagined lack.

But Creed wants to add a further angle. She writes that in her view 'the mother's [attributed?] phallus-fetish covers over, not her lack - as Freud argued - but rather, her castrating **vagina dentata**. ... Mother Alien is primarily a terrifying figure not because she is castrated but because she castrates.' (p. 22)

Creed rather loses me here. She's making an important point - and one for which I see some corroborating evidence (see below) - yet, firstly, I don't think she sufficiently explains how this new fetish comes about. Who is doing the fetishising? Which brings me to my second question. Creed **seems** to attribute the fetish to the archaic mother herself - but how could that be, since we've been told that the archaic mother is 'nothing but a fantasy' (Roger Dadoun)?

Later, on p. 72, Creed repeats the idea. Quoting Dadoun again, on how in Dracula films the archaic mother is present in such things as the 'uterine' space of the crypt, she says:

> In the conventional scenario, Dracula, with his erect body and penetrating look, becomes 'the phallus-fetish' of [attributed to?] the omnipresent mother ...

Whereupon, Creed reasserts her own claim: 'if the male vampire is a fetish figure of the mother, it seems clear that he does not represent the imaginary phallus of the mother, as Dadoun argues, but rather her terrifying [and fanged] imaginary **vagina dentata**.' Clarity, of course, is in the eye of the beholder. As I say, who **is** doing the fetishising? Not a developing child, surely? How many children know the interior of the vagina, and attribute teeth to it?

I'll leave it to the reader to decide the precise status of Creed's claim. I **guess** she's saying that the film viewer is doing the fetishising, or has lately done so, or has 'inherited' such a fetish via the culture. But she's certainly less than clear about this.

Also, it's typical of Creed that she should pass over in silence the film's reference to Joseph Conrad's 'Nostromo'. Such a reference can specify both Conrad's eponymous character ('our man' or 'boatswain', whose secret greed for silver corrupts him) and the novel itself (in which the humane, 'incorruptible' Emilia concludes that the silver is better lost). However, Creed does note how the real villain in **Alien** is the (presumably male-run) Company back home which has programmed the spaceship's computer to sacrifice the lives of the crew in the Company's interests (p. 23).

I'll also mention here how Creed's reference to **The Birds** (a film presided over, one way or another, by women characters), and her allusion to the **vagina dentata**, reminded me of Theodore Price's interpretation of that film's originally-intended ending. The film's characters were going to attempt an escape across the Golden Gate Bridge, which was to be lined on both sides by thousands of pecking birds - like teeth! According to Price, bridges, in the dreams or fantasies of some men, may represent the vagina. ('Hitchcock and Homosexuality', 1992, p. 195; cf. pp. 198-200.)

* * *

Before I discuss what Creed says about **Psycho**, I should mention the book's mid-section which leaves aside film-matters entirely and deals with Freud's famous case-study of Little Hans, a 5-year-old boy with a fear of being bitten by a horse. Freud considered that the boy's phobia was caused by his 'repressed erotic longing' for his mother (p. 92). Creed, though, in order to contest the conventional Freudian notions of the Oedipus complex and the castration complex, in which the mother is thought to be castrated (p. 94), offers a different interpretation. Creed sees Hans's anxiety as probably caused by his 'fear that his mother would carry out her earlier threat to have [him] castrated by the doctor or even by herself **because** of his erotic longings' (p. 92) - Hans, it seems, had been touching his penis (p. 89).

Well, maybe so, but that 'even by herself' is very vague. Creed, following Erich Fromm, notes that 'Freud does not discuss the significance of the fact that the threat is uttered by the mother' (p. 89). Yet is that so surprising? Hans was specifically told that **the doctor** would be the person who might cut his 'widdler' off: if **you** were told that, wouldn't you be most wary of the doctor? And, besides, isn't a boy's castration-fear supposed to stem from the time he sees that his mother has no penis? The person to whom the boy attributes his own threatened castration is, in a way, of secondary importance - there can be no forgetting the impression, once gained, that **woman** is 'castrated' (and not, presumably, by herself or by some other woman, but by a male).

Creed also notes that Hans's phobia worsens after he has his tonsils out: her unhelpful comment (she

really does seem preoccupied with spotting possible birth-symbols) is that 'Taking tonsils from the throat through the mouth is ... like a form of birth **and** of castration' (p. 94 - my emphasis). Not for the only time, Creed here seems to lose touch with her larger topic, i.e. the horror-film. In failing markedly, in my view, to enter into young Hans's world of anxiety and pain, and not even properly noting the reinforcement that going into hospital must have given to his fear of doctors, Creed misses an opportunity to 'humanise' her theorising. Moreover, I think it's very possible that, contrary to her assertion, the majority of horror films invoke less the shadowy world of uterine and post-uterine psychological states, up to, say, the time of the Oedipus crisis,[6] than they do just such 'traumatic' experiences as a child's painful and/or humiliating experiences in the real world: e.g. when it has to go into hospital. After all, every child that has its tonsils out is, in a sense, 'raped' - its body has been invaded and hurt without its understanding or consent. When, in **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** (Tobe Hooper, 1974), the **masked** figure of Leatherface approaches his intended young victims with a whirring blade raised for action, everyone's most extreme fantasies centred on 'mad doctors' (or even 'mad dentists') and operations-that-go-wrong may seem about to be realised.[7] The dark house seems in such a context less a symbol of the womb and of the mother than of the **absence** of such things, the equivalent of the strange, half-remembered surroundings of a hospital or some such place, the home that isn't a home at all ...

By the way, Leatherface provides another instance of the avoided cliché - he's no more your average sparring partner, with gloves on, than is the Little-Red-Riding-Hood lady in **Don't Look Now**. Also, he's another 'abject' figure, although **not** thereby of much use to Dr Creed, who wants as a feminist to show that woman is especially prone to be cast in the abject role in horror movies.

In any event, the whole Little Hans case must surely strike the dispassionate reader (whether of Freud or Creed) as of dubious value as evidence, and of no value as proof. Dubious as evidence, because you repeatedly notice that the boy is being 'led' in what he says by his father (who kept a journal of Hans's remarks and then presented it to Freud). No value as proof, because any interpretation of the case must amount to what at school we were taught to call a 'rash generalisation', i.e. one based on statistically insufficient evidence. Clearly, the case figures in Creed's book only so it can be critiqued: Creed, the revisionist, needs to be seen to have read her Freud in order to 'go beyond' him.

* * *

The chapter on **Psycho** in 'The Monstrous-Feminine' is, as I've said, disappointing. It contains little new information, and even some of that is questionable - such as the motives attributed to Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) for killing his mother. (His motives for also killing her lover, and later several young women, then Marion Crane and Milton Arbogast, are scarcely considered.) The film's own explanation, as provided by the psychiatrist, is ignored by Creed - including what is said about Norman's transvestism. Instead, Creed argues that basically Norman has always wanted 'to become the mother in order to prevent his own castration - to castrate rather than be castrated' (p. 140). Particularly questionable, though, is a statement like this:

> Throughout **Psycho** women are associated with eyes that stare and appraise. It is the maternal gaze that Norman most fears ... (p. 141)

When Norman speaks of the inside of madhouses, and especially 'the cruel eyes studying you' (cf the dream-sequence of Hitchcock's **Spellbound**, 1945), there's no particular suggestion that the eyes are either male **or** female. As for the stuffed birds in Norman's 'parlour', let's not forget that it was Norman who put them there. He thereby indulges his masochism, and several of the murders seem to have been intended by him to help indulge it further: like the transvestite called Buffalo Bill in Jonathan Demme's 1991 **The Silence of the Lambs** (another figure based on the real-life Ed Gein),[8] Norman wanted his female victims' skins in order to 'become' a woman himself, i.e. his mother. And I hardly think that this was his symbolic way of getting his (in fact, already dead) mother off his back, so to speak ...

Actually, Creed attributes **several** aspects of the monstrous-feminine to poor Mrs Bates: not only is she the castrating mother (on p. 144, the birds' **beaks** are invoked), but she's 'the oral mother, the incorporating, devouring mother who threatens her son' (p. 144 again - here Creed cites Norman's knowing reference to how birds 'really eat a tremendous lot'). Yet if we come back to how it was **Norman** who put

the stuffed birds in his parlour, and how he allegedly associated them with his mother who had been forever hovering over him, then surely at some level they **also** represent the fetishised 'phallic' [i.e. uncastrated] mother, a male construct, designed to **preserve** the all's-right-with-the-world male point of view. Creed herself cites Raymond Bellour on how 'the menacing shadow of the crow is projected onto the wall, **penetrating** the picture like a knifeblade or a **penis**' (quoted on p. 144 - my emphases).

For my part, I further associate Norman's mother with the archaic mother in her 'black-hole' aspect, whether that black hole is seen as referring to the womb or the vagina or something else. (Speaking generally, Creed retains nearly all her options about that - cf. pp. 27-28. Also, note the reference to 'the oral mother' in the previous paragraph. Strictly, the archaic mother is a still more 'primitive' construct, 'present in all horror films as the blackness of extinction - death', as Creed herself points out on p. 28.) Although Creed doesn't specifically note it, black holes are rife in **Psycho**.

One piece of information about the film I am indeed grateful for: how the classical painting that conceals Norman's peephole (through which **his** cruel eyes study Marion) is actually 'Susanna and the Elders', thus invoking the legend of two Jewish patriarchs who spy on the bathing Susanna before attempting to force themselves on her. But Creed elides the patriarchal connotation - just as, more crucially, she omits all direct reference to the nearby painting (the one the crow's shadow penetrates), which depicts an angel bringing two female figures into Heaven. As I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 4, this painting, with the crow's knife-like beak projecting onto it, is proleptic: it reinforces the imagery to be found elsewhere in the film associating Marion and her sister with angels, i.e. superior bird-like creatures,[9] and suggests that Marion's death at the hands of a knife-wielding 'Mrs Bates', under a halo-like shower-nozzle, may not be without its accompanying state of grace.

(On the other hand, that state of grace may be entirely Marion's self-delusion or fantasy. As also noted in 'MacGuffin' 4, Marion, despite her unconscious quoting of Milton's sonnet called 'On His Blindness', is no immortal genius ... Here, it looks like Hitchcock has simply adapted a key scene from the novel of **Spellbound**, i.e. the 1927 'The House of Dr Edwardes', by Francis Beeding. In Chapter Ten, as the insane Miss Archer is led by some of her fellow inmates, equally insane, 'towards the Radiance', and her death on a white sacrificial altar, she imagines herself being escorted by St Theresa and flights of angels towards Heaven.)[10]

* * *

My dissatisfaction with the **Psycho** part of Creed's book rather mirrors my feeling about the book overall. It simply doesn't address either the **whole** reader or the films themselves in **their** fullness. (I trust I've begun to show that.) Symptomatic of Creed's approach to the reader is how on several occasions she mentions a character or a concept pages before she explains who or what is meant.[11] For instance, there's the clumsy way (p. 9) she gives her first example of 'the abject': suddenly we find ourselves reading about Julia Kristeva (at what age?) having a glass of milk offered her (in what circumstances?) by her father and mother (why both parents?), and how the milk has a skin on top (not deliberately, surely?).

Actually, this phenomenon of how sometimes we're all repelled by elementary, or alimentary, substances is a staple of Psychology classes. I remember years ago a lecturer pointing out that none of us heeds our own saliva **until** we collect some of it in a glass and are challenged to re-imbibe it. Well, Creed, following Kristeva, spends pages on this sort of topic - she sees it as basic to the depiction of women (e.g. menstruating women) in the horror film. Only, she's content with making polemic points, such as (on p. 41) how women since ancient Judaic times have been kept 'abject' by association. (So, too, have animals, such as pigs - something not irrelevant to **Carrie**, of course. Yet once again Creed fails to regard the wider context.[12] Below, I'll mention an instance of how she herself commits a slur on animals that parallels what she condemns when it's done to women.) And though she stops well short of suggesting, for example, that ugly female dwarfs should picket re-run cinemas showing **Don't Look Now**, the over-intensity of some of her writing does have its faint absurdity.

Of course, everything's relative. By **some** academic film-writing standards, Creed is most lucid and sensible. But I still think it's foolish of her to generalise (p. 11) that when a woman is slashed in a horror-film the resulting mark on her body is 'a sign of her "difference", her impurity (**Dressed to Kill**,

Psycho)'. As I recall, that alleged phenomenon didn't help Milton Arbogast. What does **his** mark represent?

And, rather simplistically, Creed offers this comment on the Siamese twins in **Sisters** (Brian De Palma, 1973): 'the Danielle figure is castrated, as suggested by the scar on her side; the Dominique figure castrates - literally' (p. 132). What's unnerving about that reading isn't so much that it elides the fact of **Dominique**'s scar as that it assigns the meaning of 'castration' to an operation which in this case was clearly a merciful one, to separate the twins. (Mind you, I suppose it's just possible that Creed is here following some arbitrary symbolism on De Palma's part. But if that's so, she should point it out.)

At times, Creed cheats outrageously - or commits 'MacGuffin'-style 'bloopers'! She claims (p.145) that Norman Bates gives his mother 'rat poison', and calls this 'an appropriate punishment for a mother who is privately indulging in the very behaviour which she publicly condemns in her son.' Trying to explain further, she adds: 'He feeds her "ugly appetite" with poison.' Well, for a start, the film never calls it 'rat poison', only 'strychnine'. And, to transfer **Marion**'s 'ugly appetite' back to the real Mrs Bates, **and** then to attribute such an 'abject' trait, i.e. one to be indulged in secret, to rats, whom no-one has mentioned, is pushing things a bit, especially in this author - so keen to expose unfair practices![13] What's more, in all of this, Creed fails to pin-point the fairly **definite** connection made in the script between death-by-strychnine, called by Sheriff Chambers 'an ugly way to die', and the film's 'ugly appetite' allusion. Rats don't enter the picture, but Norman's slander - uglifying - of the act of love is there, all right.

Here are just two more instances of Creed 'at work'. Like Camille Paglia, she's concerned to note the several variants of snake-imagery that have been applied to women. Still, it's hardly valid to claim (p. 33) that Regan in **The Exorcist** is snake-like because her namesake in 'King Lear' is (said to be) called 'sharper than a serpent's tooth'. In fact, Lear is addressing his famous remarks on filial ingratitude (I, iv) to Regan's sister, Goneril, and (Shakespeare's) Regan hasn't yet begun to show her own teeth.

Likewise, to state blandly that the name of the Sphinx (of riddling fame) is 'derived from "sphincter", [which] suggests she is the mother of sphincteral training ...' (p. 26) is to severely distort matters. Instead of 'derived from', I suggest 'cognate with' is more accurate. (Chambers English Dictionary gives the root-meaning of 'Sphinx' as the Greek **sphingein**, to draw tight.) Of course, that allows a quite different meaning, one referring to how the Sphinx's riddles were difficult to solve. And, in fact, that's closer to the interpretation given by Paglia, who comments helpfully: 'Her [i.e. the Sphinx's] name means "the Throttler" (from the Greek **sphiggo**, "strangle"). The riddle by which she defeats all men but Oedipus is the ungraspable mystery of nature, which will defeat Oedipus anyway.' (Paglia, p. 50)

Now, I don't doubt that many academics will relish this book. It gives them sundry places to jigsaw-in theories of their own. (Theory, always theory! That's to say, **concepts** everywhere, hardly any direct **percepts** - the terms are Schopenhauer's.)[14] Nevertheless, Hitchcock's remark to Truffaut about **Psycho** - 'I can't get a real appreciation of the picture in the terms we're using now' - still largely applies, I think.

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Notes

1. See 'The Lost Paradise: Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case** (1947)' in 'MacGuffin' 12, esp. pp. 12-13.

2. In a sense, he's following in the footsteps of Aschenbach in Thomas Mann's novella 'Death in Venice' (1913) and Luchino Visconti's 1971 film version. In Hitchcock's **Vertigo**, Scottie pursues a not dissimilar quest - though there the hills of San Francisco are clearly representative of the mother's breast. Cf 'The Fragments of the Mirror: **Vertigo** (1958) and its Sources' in 'MacGuffin' 11, p. 9 and passim.

3. Please don't tell me that authors/'auteurs' are dead! Paglia is devastating about that. 'The

English language', she writes, 'was created by poets, a five-hundred-year enterprise of emotion and metaphor, the richest internal dialogue in world literature. French rhetorical models are too narrow for the English tradition. Most pernicious of French imports is the notion that there is no person behind a text. Is there anything **more** affected, aggressive, and relentlessly concrete than a Parisian intellectual behind his/her turgid text? The Parisian is a provincial when he pretends to speak for the universe.' (Paglia, 1991, p. 34) I'll have to think some more about that 'relentlessly concrete' reference, but certainly Paglia carries truth before her in this passage.

4. On p. 55, Creed speaks of not one but 'three primal scenes - conception, sexual difference, desire'.

5. The similarities of **Alien** and **The Birds** - such as the essential isolation of their respective settings - are obviously underlined by the presence of Veronica Cartwright in both. (She plays young Cathy Brenner in Hitchcock's film.)

6. Anyone who has watched footage of babies **happily** swimming underwater must surely entertain doubts about just how scary uterine or natal states, and the like, really are!

7. There's a good entry (by Douglas Winter) on 'Mad Doctors' in Jack Sullivan (ed.), 'The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural' (1986), pp. 279-80. It notes that such a theme has roots extending at least to Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus' (1818). I would suggest that both **Psycho** and **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** simply provide **variants** on the 'home that isn't a home at all' as seen in a film like Robert Wiene's classic **The Cabinet of Dr Caligari** (1919) ...

8. Ed Gein (see 'MacGuffin' 4) also provided the 'inspiration' for Norman in **Psycho** and Leatherface in **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre**.

9. In **Spellbound** (1945), there are references to both angels and harpies. At one point, Dr Brulov (Michael Chekhov) thinks that such a winged figure in J.B.'s dream may represent himself, a male. Dr Creed, please note.

10. As several 'MacGuffins' have shown, it was common for Hitchcock to transport a key scene, not previously used by him, from a literary source that he **had** already filmed, to one of his later movies. See, for example, the discussion in 'MacGuffin' 12 of how a 'love-death' from W. Somerset Maugham's 'The Hairless Mexican' (filmed by Hitchcock as **The Secret Agent**, 1936) ended up in **Topaz** (1969).

Another example: a 'harlequin-like' red, green and white flashing neon sign outside a window in Helen Simpson and Clemence Dane's novel/play 'Enter Sir John' (filmed by Hitchcock as **Murder!**, 1930) transposed, with its 'theatrical' connotation, to **Rope** (1948).

11. If at all. Thus a reference to Kali on p. 126 assumes an earlier, non-existent discussion of that goddess's special significance as 'female monster'.

12. For a **truly** horrendous account of the effect of Judaic ('kosher') rules concerning non-defilement, during the killing of animals, see Professor Peter Singer's 'Animal Liberation' (2nd edition, 1990), pp. 153-56. Cf next note.

13. I once wrote to Dr Creed, a Melbourne academic, noting her 'feminist' interest in teaching a course on 'Hitchcock'; **inter alia**, I referred to how Professor Peter Singer, another Melbourne academic, had developed his notion of 'speciesism' - analogous to 'sexism' - and pointed out that many of the creatures we cut up and eat have at least as high a degree of sentience and IQ **as human babies** (cf the swimming babies mentioned in note 6, above). Dr Creed did not reply - perhaps she thought me a **rat**bag! Or was it just that one '-ism' at a time is all that Dr Creed can handle? (By contrast, anyone who has read Schopenhauer would know that the issues are related, and interconnected, and that **all** academic over-specialisation is false to the larger reality - the theme of this book review.)

14. An example of a relatively concrete, and therefore relatively demonstrable and trustworthy, **percept** is given by the play on the word 'ugly' in Joseph Stefano's script of **Psycho**, mentioned in the text. Naturally, interpretation is still involved - but it can be tested, rather than merely asserted by appeal to authority (or theory).

BLOOPERS

Here's more on John Buchan, author of 'The Thirty-Nine Steps' (1915), whose work I continue to read with pleasure - though the later novels do almost maunder at times. First, 'The MacGuffin' was **right** to say that Buchan wrote travel books ('MacGuffin' 10, but retracted in the 'Bloopers' section of 'MacGuffin' 11!). I was scanning our family bookshelves recently and rediscovered a copy of Buchan's 'The Last Secrets: The Final Mysteries of Exploration' (1923), which contains essays ranging across most of the Continents.

On the other hand, I was rash to claim ('MacGuffin' 10) that the formidable mother of Medina in 'The Three Hostages' (1924) is the prototype of Mrs Sebastian, the mother of Alex Sebastian, in Hitchcock's **Notorious** (1946). There's a similarity, certainly, but in fact the basis of the film is 'The Song of the Dragon' (1921) by American author John Taintor Foote - a story which has a formidable mother (and father, too) of its own!

Nevertheless, Hitchcock, a Buchan-admirer, surely noticed how the central idea in Foote's story - its young heroine is prepared to sleep with one of her country's enemies in order to get vital information - resembles a key plot-point in Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' (1919). See, in particular, the last line of that book's Chapter 11 ('The Valley of Humiliation').

Again, reviewing James Naremore's **North by Northwest** book, in 'MacGuffin' 13, I suggested that in some ways Vandamm (James Mason) resembles the villainous Carl Peterson in 'Bulldog Drummond' (1920) by Buchan's contemporary, 'Sapper'. Well, maybe so, but in fairness to Professor Naremore I should have noted that Buchan did get in first, notably with **his** German villain, the Graf von Schwabing, aka Moxon Ivery, in 'Mr Standfast'.

Also, I might have noted how the elegant, even dandified, Vandamm resembles Medina in 'The Three Hostages'. In Chapter Four of Buchan's novel, there's a remarkably frank hero-villain confrontation. Medina's world-weariness, and brilliance, soon become apparent. (I was reminded of such literary figures as Lord Byron and Dickens's James Steerforth.) Pertinent to Vandamm's evident bisexuality is this only half-grudging comment by Buchan's Hannay about Medina: 'He is the only fellow I ever heard of who was adored by women and also liked by men.'

* * *

Speaking of Dickens ... I was wrong to say of Holloway Prison (article on Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case** in 'MacGuffin' 12) that it 'was an old building even in Dickens's time'. In fact, Holloway Prison in London opened on February 6th, 1852, the day before Dickens's 40th birthday. (It originated, however, from the old Giltspur Street Compter, a debtors' prison and house of correction, in Holborn. The Compter, no longer needed, was pulled down in 1855.)

Holloway wasn't always just a women's prison. Its gateway tower resembles the approach to a grand mediaeval castle - see Hitchcock's film. It was modelled on the main front of Warwick Castle.

On the right of the entrance is the wing originally devoted to women prisoners only. On the other side of the doorway is a lofty hall. This was used as a reception room for prisoners.

A 1930s book notes: 'The appearance of the women prisoners in Holloway differs little from that of the inmates of Poor Law institutions, except that they are always neater. All the women wear the same kind of clothes - white caps with frills, and blue or grey cotton dresses.'

Most of this, except for the detail of the frilly caps, is shown in Hitchcock's film. Perhaps Alida Valli wasn't given a cap because she was playing a remand-prisoner.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen. In 'MacGuffin' 11, on p. 18, we reported (re an allusion in Hitchcock's **Vertigo**) that 'aircraft magnate and movie tycoon Howard Hughes once attempted to design a strapless bra for Jane

Russell.' We now understand that it wasn't a **strapless** bra that Hughes designed, but a **seamless** one. Sorry.

* * *

Did anyone notice this slip when I was discussing Josephine Tey's novel, 'A Shilling for Candles' (1936), in the article last time on Hitchcock's **Young and Innocent**? On p. 20, I referred to 'Chapter 19, ten from the end'. Yet on p. 23, I (correctly) called Chapter 27 'the final chapter'! Okay, I own up to my lack of mathematics. Chapter 19 is actually **eight** from the end. (Isn't it?)

* * *

Twice now I've failed to nail an important parallel in the thinking of the philosophers Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). When I mentioned last time (note 30, on p. 25), re **Young and Innocent**, that some 'moderns' like Ryle 'believe that mind and body are indistinguishable, that the mind is part of the body's activity and not a separate, independent entity', I noted that I had made the same point about an aspect of **Stage Fright** (1950) back in 'MacGuffin' 2. Yet on neither occasion did I point out, as I had meant to, that Schopenhauer's notion of 'the Will' fully anticipates Ryle on this. Cf Bryan Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 124 and passim.

* * *

Finally, I've only lately discovered that the name of Professor S.S. Prawer, whose book, 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' (1980), was reviewed in 'MacGuffin' 2, refers to a woman and not a man. Apologies for the review's misleading reference.

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The Dandy in Hitchcock

(Editor's note. Thomas Elsaesser's article represents the text, slightly revised, of a paper he delivered to the Rome Hitchcock Conference in May, 1980. The papers from the Conference were published in Italian as 'Per Alfred Hitchcock', edited by Edoardo Bruno, Editori del Grifo, 1981. However, this is the first publication in English of Professor Elsaesser's paper.)

No doubt, every critic prefers to fashion his or her own 'Alfred Hitchcock' in the mirror of the pleasures the films provide. In contrast, most scholars have arrived at **their** Hitchcock by paying scrupulous attention to the work, the individual films, as is quite proper - the more so, since Hitchcock the man was an exceptionally private person. And yet, I think we are all aware of the paradox that this private person also cultivated an exceptionally public persona quite apart, or so it seems, from his work. He was a star, he knew he was a star, and he dramatised himself as a star.[1]

The question I am pursuing in this paper is whether in this most self-reflexive of cinematic oeuvres we do not find a 'portrait of the artist'. Not, of course, of the historical individual - that can be left to the biographers - but of the type of creative being who bridges and even reconciles the rift that in the past often appeared in Hitchcock criticism: between the entertainer and the 'serious artist'. Rather than polarise the two terms, I want to make my tentative answer hinge upon what I consider to be the enigma of Hitchcock's Englishness.

In the critical literature, there is no shortage of coherent images of Hitchcock. No need for me to represent them in detail: the Catholic and Jansenist, the artist of the occult forces of light and darkness, the master-technician, the supreme showman, and so on. In Britain, two Hitchcocks dominated the crucial period of revaluation in the '60s. One was found in the pages of 'Sight and Sound', characterised by either disdainful or regretful dismissal of the American Hitchcock. The foil for it was a preference, nostalgically tinged, for Hitchcock the craftsman-stylist with his eye for typically English realism or social satire. Polemically opposed to this view was Robin Wood's Hitchcock, held up not only as a very serious artist, but one who in his American films had a consistent theme, almost a

humanist concern: the therapeutic formation of the couple and the family.[2] Such a notion of Hitchcock the moralist was already anticipated and rejected by Lindsay Anderson when he wrote in 1949: 'Hitchcock has never been a **serious** director. His films are interesting neither for their ideas nor for their characters. None of his early melodramas can be said to carry a message, and when one does appear, as in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940), it is banal in the extreme. ... In the same way, Hitchcock's characterisation has never achieved - or aimed at - anything more than surface verisimilitude.'[3]

Peter Wollen might be said to have developed **his** Hitchcock in opposition to both of these English constructs, apparently leaning more towards seeing Hitchcock as a director who **subverts** the morality, the politics and the realism of his sources, in order to exhibit their narrative and structural mechanisms. 'For Hitchcock it is not the problem of loyalty or allegiance which is uppermost, but the mechanisms of spying and pursuit in themselves'[4] But these mechanisms, as Wollen wisely adds, 'have their own psychological significance. In the end we discover that to be a master-technician in the cinema is to speak a rhetoric which is none other than the rhetoric of the unconscious.'[5] Since then, almost all the major readings of Hitchcock have followed and explored this path - often with spectacular success. The very force and cogency of this success, notably through Raymond Bellour's work, while strongly persuading us to see the American cinema and classical narrative as remade in the image of Hitchcock, makes me, perversely, want to look for a more limited, historical, more English and more 'ideological' Hitchcock.

I take my cue from a few casual remarks by Raymond Durgnat, who has commented on Hitchcock's affinities with Symbolism and Decadence. Durgnat writes: 'Since the cinema is traditionally associated with the lower social grades, a man who delights in perfectly wrought film form is likely to find himself referred to as a master craftsman, and the full sense of his involvement with aesthetics is missed. ... Hitchcock is as lordly as any Symbolist of **l'art pour l'art**. ... A craftsman whose craft is aesthetics and who takes a deep pleasure in practising it as meticulously as Hitchcock does, is an aesthete.' And Durgnat points to a spiritual affinity with Oscar Wilde, calling Hitchcock 'an epicure of suspense and terror' whose films bring to mind 'titles of the Decadence: Le Jardin des Supplices. Les Fleurs du Mal.'[6] It is this cultural sensibility and aesthetic temperament that I want to investigate a little further.

Is Hitchcock an aesthete in his work, and was he, as Durgnat implies, a dandy in his life? Let me cite some typical attitudes that are supposed to make a Dandy. A Dandy is preoccupied, above all, with style. A Dandy makes a cult of clothes and manners. A Dandy has an infinite capacity to astound and surprise. A Dandy is given to a form of wit which seems to his contemporaries mere cynicism. A Dandy must be negative: neither believing in the world of men - virility, sports - nor in the world of women - the earthy, the life-giving, the intuitive, the natural and flowing. A Dandy prefers fantasy and beauty over maturity and responsibility, he pursues perfection to the point of perversity. He is, to quote an authoritative study: 'A man dedicated solely to his own perfection through a ritual of taste ... , free of all human commitments that conflict with taste: passion, moralities, ambitions, politics or occupations.'[7] And he despises everything that is vulgar, common, associated with commerce and a mass-public.

Now, I grant you, it is difficult to recognise in this description the familiar and portly figure, dressed in sober business suits; a Catholic, a devoted husband and father, the son of a grocer; the quiet, private upholder of domestic virtues par excellence. It is difficult, if not incongruous, to discern in the familiar silhouette the traits of a Baudelaire, or an Oscar Wilde, or a Proust, or a Diaghilev. Neither does there seem to be any connection, either directly or indirectly, with the British Pre-Raphaelites, or the Bloomsbury Group. None of the gregariousness, none of the in-group rituals, but also little of the élitism or the anti-democratic exclusivity of the European aesthetic coteries in literature or the performing arts.

But let us look a little further. First, sartorial dandyism, the cult of clothes. True, Hitchcock wore sober business suits, but he **always** wore them, in every climate, in his office, on the set, in the Californian summer, in the Swiss Alps or in Marrakesh. As John Russell Taylor remarks: 'When he was filming he would turn up punctiliously at the Studio every day disguised as an English businessman in the invariable dark suit, white shirt and restrained dark tie. In the 1930s the fact of wearing a suit and tie, even in the suffocating heat of a Los Angeles summer, was not so bizarre as it has since become, but in a world where many of the film-makers affected fancy-dress - De Mille's riding breeches, Sternberg's

tropical tea-planter outfit - Hitch's was the fanciest of them all by being the least suitable and probable.'[8] Quite plainly, Hitchcock was applying a most rigorous public gesture: the dandyism of sobriety.

Next, the ritual of manners. It already annoyed Lindsay Anderson that Hitchcock, when he came to London, stayed at a luxury hotel. It smacked to him of Bel Air snobbery, contempt, and a vulgar display of money. The point, however, was that Hitchcock always stayed at the same hotel, in the same suite at Claridge's, just as, at home, he always had dinner at Chasens'. Affecting a superstitious nature, a fear of crossing the street or driving a car, was part of the same public gesture: to make out of the contingencies of existence an absolute and demanding ritual, and thereby to exercise perfect and total control, almost as if to make life his own creation. It is a choice not so different from, say, that made by Ronald Firbank, a notable dandy of the '20s, who, on moving to another part of London, decided to retain his gardener, but who insisted that the fellow should walk, in a green baize apron and carrying a watering can, from his lodgings along Picadilly and Regent Street to Firbank's new home in Chelsea.

Hitchcock's daily rituals, which he made known to everyone, are not only a rich man's indulgence of his own convenience, for they touch one of the Dandy's main philosophical tenets: to make no concessions to Nature, at whatever price. Hitchcock's life, which has been seen as that of 'a straightforward middle-class Englishman who happens to be an artistic genius',[9] seems, in its particular accentuation, its imperviousness to both change and time, more problematic, more enigmatic, than merely the attempt to cling to the values of his native country out of season, as it were. Nor is it simply the mask of a man whose painful shyness makes him adopt a role that everyone recognises and therefore doesn't question: his work is too much obsessed with domination - of who controls whom by the power of the gaze, by a play of fascination - to be so easily explained. More pertinent, then, is the suggestion that Hitchcock's lifestyle was a determined protest, the triumph of artifice over accident, a kind of daily victory over chance, in the name of a spirituality dedicating itself to making life imitate art. The revolt against Nature, of course, is one of the strongest traditions of European aestheticism and dandyism - from Baudelaire's 'Paradis Artificiels', via Huysman's 'A Rebours', to Oscar Wilde's 'The Truth of Masks' and 'The Decay of Lying'. From the latter comes the most well-known defence of Hitchcock's use of back-projection, process-shots and studio-sets: 'The more we study art, the less we care for nature. What art really reveals to us is nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. Nature has good intentions, of course, but as Aristotle once said, she cannot carry them out. When I look at a landscape I cannot help seeing all its defects. It is fortunate for us, however, that nature is so imperfect, as otherwise we should have no art at all. Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach nature her proper place.'[10] Hitchcock fully responded to Wilde's challenge when, famously, he said: 'My films are not slices of life. They're slices of cake.'[11]

As in his work, so in his life, Hitchcock excelled in turning a cliché inside out. Everyone is agreed that Hitchcock was a professional, an addict to work. Yet part of the image of a dandy is that he disdains work. Hitchcock was able to cultivate both images simultaneously: that of perfection, and that of effortless ease. For him, a film is finished before it is begun: creation takes place elsewhere, in another scene, not in the process of filming. No commentator leaves out the description of Hitchcock on the set, sitting in his director's chair, appearing languid, his mind on something else, or simply looking bored. He made a point of never looking through the camera lens. 'It would be as though I distrusted the cameraman and he was a liar. ... I don't rush the same evening to see "Has it come out?" That would be like going to the local camera shop to see the snaps and make sure that nobody has moved.'[12]

This immobility of Hitchcock's is another important clue: the true work of the Dandy is to expend all his effort on creating about his person the impression of utter stasis. One recalls the Sphinx-like profile he presented as his trademark; and how, in later life, his public appearance was designed to accentuate the statuesqueness of his massive body. Disarmingly, he turned himself into his own monument, aware of his own immortality. Of course, he carried it lightly, like the wax effigy with which he let himself be photographed and which, deep-frozen, appeared amongst his wife's groceries in the refrigerator. In a typical inversion of a Romantic motif - that of the Double - Hitchcock rehearsed his own death and lent it the semblance of life.

If his working methods show a disdain for improvisation, his films stand and fall by the degree to which they exhibit the intricacies of their design. While one can interpret this as a need for order, for control (and the domination of recalcitrant material is clearly part of the filmmaker's ambition to possess the world and fix it through the gaze), it is equally the case that in the quality and patterning of the scripts, Hitchcock manifested a most exuberant freedom and playfulness, a love of ornament, of which the much-vaunted realistic touches seem only the most obvious manifestations. Artifice, in Hitchcock, controls the shape of the films' dramatic structure, based as it is on always seeking out contrasts, counterpoints, ironies and reversals, thereby also appealing to a powerfully **intellectual** sense of abstract form.

In this regard, Hitchcock is a filmmakers' director, and one wonders whether the persuasiveness of a Proppian or Levi-Straussian analysis of Hitchcock's plots stems in no small measure from the 'musical' or contrapuntal temperament typical of an aesthete's sensibility, at least as much as from the archetypal, mythological nature of the communication set in motion by the cinema generally, considered as mass-art narrative. Paradoxically, this draws attention to a certain modernism in Hitchcock, which has to do with forcing as sharply as possible the line where the sensuous, the concrete quality of film, appears as a disguise for the mechanical, the abstract, and **its** sensuality. Gavin Lambert has remarked that 'many scenes and details from [Hitchcock's] movies could be titled like surrealistic paintings: Human Being Caged by Bird, Cigarette Extinguished in Fried Egg, and ... Young Man Dressed as his Dead Mother ...'.[13] Rather than relating this aspect of Hitchcock to an approximation of dream-like states, an argument can be made that sees him as a filmmaker of ideas, in much the same way as Duchamp was a painter of ideas, and who followed a similar cult of the sterile, of the degradation inherent in matter, considered as the essence of male desire and its manifestations in art.

If this seems rather fanciful, something like it has nonetheless been implicitly recognised before. Hitchcock's critics, for instance, have often been offended by what appeared to be his obsession with 'effects', his purely external manipulation of fear, suspense and the audience's emotions - which he played, according to the well-known dictum, like other people play the piano. What, negatively, have been described as 'gimmicks', tricks, are at the same time signs of a will towards abstraction, and a part of a modernist's conceptualisation of the artist's material. One of the 'gimmicks' that Hitchcock's realist critics objected to, for instance, was the scene in **The 39 Steps** (1935), when the woman's scream, on discovering the body, was in effect substituted by the whistle of a train entering a tunnel. Or, in a similar register, there's the electronic simulation of bird-cries and wing-beating in **The Birds** (1963), the use of a violin at an abnormally high pitch in **Psycho** (1960), the look of surprise on the face of the real Mr Townsend in **North by Northwest** (1959) which turns out to be due not to the photo Cary Grant is holding out to him but to the knife in his back. Hitchcock's imagination seizes on occasions, emotions, at that point where within the human element the mechanical becomes visible, undoing thereby the anthropomorphism that the cinema so deceptively simulates.[14] One remembers the scene, as described to Truffaut, that was to have gone into **North by Northwest**: a discussion between the hero and a foreman as they walk along a Detroit car assembly line. We see a brand-new car being put together, and when it's finally completed and rolls off the end of the line, a man's body pops out. Not only does the mechanical here produce the human, it produces it **ex nihilo**, so to speak, and what it produces is a corpse. The scene has a special status in never having been filmed and yet many times told: it's a parable about cinema, the making of a Hitchcock film.

The principle at work here is that of negativity, where the human is bounded everywhere and contained by the mechanical, by death and by absence: all metaphors of the cinema at work in defying Nature. It can perhaps be best exemplified by repeating Hitchcock's own version of the **MacGuffin**: 'The word MacGuffin comes from a story about two men in an English train, and one says to the other: "What's that package on the baggage rack over your head?" "Oh," he says, "that's a MacGuffin." The first one says, "Well, what's a MacGuffin?" "It's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands." So the other one says, "But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands!" And he answers, "Then that's no MacGuffin."'[15]

We know that the MacGuffin is the red herring, the thing the characters make much of, but which for the story is irrelevant, and for the audience no more than a bait. But looked at from another aspect, Hitchcock's story of the MacGuffin is the very epitome of a narrative process, the process of negation, of cancelling something out, what in the language of Derrida one might call an 'erasure'. Phrased by

Hitchcock as a kind of pseudo-definition, the anecdote confirms, in a most theoretical way, Hitchcock's profound grasp of what he usually puts in rather simpler terms, like 'I'm interested not so much in the stories I tell as in the means of telling them.'[16] The MacGuffin, considered as a structure, turns on a contradiction: 'That's a MacGuffin'/'That's not a MacGuffin'. And it does so by operating a switch of identity and transferring the terms' denotation. The MacGuffin is, in Hitchcock's pure cinema, the 'pure signifier', to which no signified corresponds. Without stretching the point, one might speak here of the logic of transference itself, of the dynamic of substitution and erasure. In a film like **Strangers on a Train** (1951), this logic can be observed in its most abstract form at the same time as it is firmly embedded in the narrative itself. As critics have remarked, the 'theme' of transference of guilt, the exchange of crime, the doppelgänger-motif, is actually realised in terms of a series of verbal and visual puns, centred on the notions of crossing, crossing over, double-crossing, criss-crossing: visually, the film opens with feet crossing the frame diagonally, then the shape of a double cross formed by the railway tracks, and finally, the crossing of legs, where the two protagonists accidentally meet. On the verbal level, you have the play on the moral implication of crossing someone, running across someone, being cross with someone and double-crossing someone: all in all, a remarkable case of 'inner speech' as it was defined by the Russian Formalists in the 1920s. Not to mention the crossed tennis rackets on Guy's cigarette lighter, or the spectators going cross-eyed during an exchange of volley-shots. This is presumably why the film does't end with Bruno's death on the merry-go-round: by repeating the opening scene in the train, and the opening line, 'Say, aren't you Guy Haines?', the film seems to cancel itself by establishing the diagrammatic abstraction in a kind of double mirror, where the mathematical figures of the double (parallel) and the diagonal cross emerge as the true obsession of the film. As Hitchcock says to Truffaut, 'Isn't it a fascinating design? One could study it forever.'[17] Similarly, an early film like **Number Seventeen** (1932), much underrated by critics looking for realist touches, is entirely constructed around transfer, switch and substitution in an abstract cancellation of the signified, reminiscent of that other master of pure cinema, Fritz Lang.

This 'conceptual' quality of Hitchcock's imagination, which one might with perhaps too slight an emphasis on its many implications, describe as a love of paradox, is worth noting because the issue of Hitchcock's **morality** has so often been debated. If for Rohmer and Chabrol the master-theme is the transference of guilt, if Robin Wood found his therapeutic theme in the moral ambiguities of choices opening up at every turn, if we can find Levi-Straussian antimonies and binary oppositions generating and traversing every text, if the secret of Hitchcock's enunciative process is a principle of alternation, we are clearly dealing with something which in its structural dimension considerably undercuts a specific moral impulse that is supposed to inform the work. Rather, it is the insistence on form itself that constitutes an essential part of Hitchcock's morality.[18]

One evident implication, surely, is that Hitchcock's art is the art of surface, intimately connected with the notion of effect on the one hand, and with the sensibility of the dandy on the other. One might see it as itself a paradox: Hitchcock cultivates surface as the true profundity of the cinema, and it would be shallow indeed to call him the moralist of appearance. There is in his films a complete devotion to surface, which should not be mistaken for a mere interest in technique, and it might be more appropriate to say that technique is only the very inadequate name applied to a cinema dedicated to the rule of contiguity and metonymy. Whether in the accidental brush of feet in **Strangers on a Train**, the crossed trajectories in a hotel lobby of **North by Northwest** ('Paging Mr Kaplan') or the converging paths when Karen Black suddenly appears out of nowhere and forces Bruce Dern to stop in **Family Plot** (1976) - in every instance, the narrative is generated out of a veritable 'splicing together': the fortuitous encounter of the unlikely with the improbable. The somewhat facile generalisation that in Hitchcock evil does not lurk **behind** a door but is there in broad daylight, and comes out of a blue sky, might be rephrased by saying that montage, in Hitchcock as in Eisenstein, is the very sign of a categorical refusal to give the cinematic image any kind of transcendental value. And it seems entirely appropriate that film scholars, digging deeper in his films, should discover structures that reveal an ever greater simplicity, where the elements become more mathematical, more musical, more schematic. It is therefore one of the incidental virtues of Raymond Bellour's work that it emphatically brings us back to the surface in Hitchcock, where what we need to know can be grasped by an attention to segmentation, the interplay that arises from the precision with which the filmmaker controls, for instance, the size of the shot, the direction of the gaze and the motility of the camera.[19]

By outlining some of Hitchcock's particular characteristics as a filmmaker of surface and contiguity, I

am suggesting that the chance encounter, the collision of apparently unrelated destinies, as in **North by Northwest**, or **Psycho**, or **Strangers on a Train**, leads us not necessarily into the realm of moral and metaphysical essences, but may also constitute a denial of essence, an aesthetic delight in what, from a different vantage-point, is always a catastrophe: identity as merely the violent suppression of random gestures and exchanges. In Hitchcock, action always takes precedence over character, which is why his narratives offer themselves for structural or morphological analysis.[20]

Such partiality for the contiguous is an important clue to Hitchcock's humour and, more specifically, his irrepressible penchant for playing the practical joker, the perpetrator of hoaxes: numerous stories, anecdotes and legends, kept in circulation not least by Hitchcock himself, invariably testify to his wish to confound a certain naive literalness with lessons in 'lateral thinking'. For instance, there's the story of Hitchcock serving blue food at dinner because one of his guests had, on a previous occasion, made a crack about the master's devotion to 'cordon bleu' cooking. It would be worthwhile to study in detail the principles underlying Hitchcock's wit, his verbal playfulness, his epigrams: these things relate closely to the predominance of paradox and dramatic irony in his plots, and to the principle of erasure through double transfer which I briefly analysed as the structure of the MacGuffin. To give an example of Hitchcock's verbal dandyism, let me cite an anecdote that James Stewart liked to tell about work on the set: 'Hitchcock actually has very little regard for the spoken word ... He pays no attention to the actual words - he's done all that, finalised all that months before. He's an absolute villain to script girls and people that have to follow the lines. So when the script girl says to him, "Mr Hitchcock, Mr Stewart didn't say anything like what's in the script", he'll say, "It sounded all right; **grammatically** it was all right."'[21]

The need to startle and to baffle an audience is of course part of any showman's artistic make-up. But the practical joker displays a particularly violent ambiguity: he attracts and holds an audience in order to distance himself the more definitely from any community with it. He recalls, in this guise, Baudelaire's **saltimbanque** - the mountebank, the circus artist, the jester of modernist literature and painting - often a figure of pathos, as he stands apart from the crowd yet bears the burden of their amusement. To the unconscious disloyalty of the audience corresponds the practical joker's betrayal of his victim's trust. We find, especially in Hitchcock's British films, a number of references to this ambiguous figure: for instance, the portrait of the jester which plays such an important role in **Blackmail** (1929), or the murderers in the 1930 **Murder!** (playing a circus acrobat) and the 1937 **Young and Innocent** (disguised as a black minstrel), both of whom one hesitates to call villains, precisely because the pathos of their costume underlines their separateness and isolation from people enjoying each other's company. Separateness, distance, is the hallmark of the public persona which Hitchcock also created for himself with his television appearances. Not only did he stand apart, there was the manner in which he 'presented' the TV shows, quite different from the personal appearances in the films: the host's presentations of the 'Alfred Hitchcock Hour' displayed the more grotesque, clownish, aesthetically aggressive sides of his showmanship, letting these find expression and form in grand-guignol images of himself with a bloody hatchet buried in his bald pate, or carrying his own head under his arm.

The saltimbanque, on the face of it, seems to have little in common with the dandy, especially since we do find quite a number of dandies among the villains in Hitchcock's films. From Ivor Novello in **The Lodger** (1926), Peter Lorre in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934), Robert Walker in **Strangers on a Train**, down to James Mason in **North by Northwest**, Hitchcock's villains are often either sharp dressers or aristocratic aesthetes. Yet many of Hitchcock's **heroes** are practical jokers and aristocratic rogues: Robert Donat in **The 39 Steps**, Cary Grant in the 1941 **Suspicion** (and the 1955 **To Catch a Thief**), not to mention Tippi Hedren who in **The Birds** is introduced as a practical joker.

The sensibility I am trying to outline for understanding the Hitchcock persona, then, is clearly a composite one: a combination of the aesthete, the rogue and the mountebank. At the same time,, it's precisely this somewhat unlikely combination that makes Hitchcock's dandyism specifically English and historically definable. For these attitudes can be seen to occupy, in the literary and artistic culture of the 1920s and 1930s, one side of a dialectic which opposes the values of Victorian and Edwardian public life - social responsibility, maturity, moral and artistic seriousness - with the values of a generation who was in rebellion against identifying art exclusively with seriousness, an attitude they considered philistine, suffocating and inartistic. Instead, they affected and cultivated, out of an equally serious commitment to art, a mode of irresponsibility, playfulness, unseriousness and sexual

ambiguity that combined the stance of the Oscar Wilde dandy with a more aggressive brand of schoolboy humour and a wilful immaturity. Reacting to the 'consensus humanism' of Edwardian England, because they saw in the cultural forms of seriousness and responsibility an ideology of power and social hierarchy digging itself in, after the debacle of the First World War, the dandies of the '20s and '30s, according to a recent study of the period, 'shared a sense of humour, a humour developed to abnormal intensity, so that it takes over the psychic and social functions usually performed by the erotic or idealistic aspects of personality'.[22]

This seems to me a pertinent observation in relation to Hitchcock: if, however remotely, he belongs to this side of the cultural divide, then it may be possible to see his irony, his verbal wit, the apparent unseriousness and showmanship both in his persona and as it manifests itself in the structure and material of his films, as itself part of a more coherent project - that of a refusal, a rejection, a protest against a specifically English concept of maturity, dominant in the culture in which he grew up. We could then say, without merely stating a paradox, that Hitchcock's cultivated unseriousness has behind it the force of a moral stance. In any direct sense, Hitchcock is not a social critic: his morality resides in the complexity of his dandyism and what it entails ideologically. That it is a morality mediated by a culturally specific gesture of refusal makes the reading of his films in the manner of Robin Wood so problematic, because the values that Wood asserts in Hitchcock (maturity, moral growth, the therapeutic theme) are precisely the values upheld by the inheritors of the Grand Tradition against which the dandy in Hitchcock is in revolt. On the other hand, a purely formal or structural reading of Hitchcock tends to ignore the extent to which Hitchcock's anti-humanism, his cult of artifice and surface, are the result of a moral and historical **parti pris**. That Hitchcock chose the dandy side of the British cultural character - a choice greatly facilitated by his move to Hollywood - shows another irony; for, in Hollywood, the dandy turned into the saltimbanque. There, Hitchcock chose a disguise that looked remarkably like it belonged to the other party - that of philistine Victorianism.

It doesn't seem entirely by chance, then, that one finds most of the English dandies from the '30s, but also after, choosing to live a kind of double life: both inside and outside the British Establishment. Many of the writers and artists among them moved into voluntary exile - California, France, Italy. Some of them deliberately betrayed their social class: W.H. Auden, Isherwood, Spender siding with the cause of the international proletariat, Oswald Mosley founding the British Fascist Party. Others, in apparently secure and even higher places, chose to betray their country. For among the dandies of the '30s are Guy Burgess, George Blake, Donald Maclean and Anthony Blunt: all at various times spies and agents for the Soviet Union.

This peculiar complexion of the British dandy may well induce us to look once more at the preponderance of the spy, the traitor, the agent and the double-agent in Hitchcock's work. In the image of the saboteur, the secret agent, the man who knows too much, the foreign correspondent, there is always in Hitchcock an emphasis on disguise and mise-en-scène. Now, a popular entertainer knows that spy stories will always find their public: but few filmmakers have given the thrill of playing double-agent quite as consummate an embodiment in film after film as Hitchcock. One may well ask whether the man who in his public persona chose to 'disguise' himself as a dandy and jester did not put into these thrilling villains a little piece of his own creative self, giving us a portrait of the artist not just as modest metteur-en-scène, but as the man who knew too much. Or, putting it slightly differently, the role Hitchcock, through his long years in California, pleased himself to perform was not, as many believed, that of unofficial ambassador. Instead, he was the secret agent of an Englishness more devious for being deadpan, in a medium that happily knows loyalty and pays allegiance not to King and Country but to the customer as King: His/Her Majesty the spectator. However, this loyalty, too, must not be taken altogether at face value. Hitchcock's films - splitting our gaze and dividing our attention, transferring our identity and switching our allegiance - teach us the subtlest and most beguiling form of treason: recognising in the other a part of ourselves. Putting our ordinary selves under erasure, the Dandy in Hitchcock makes us rediscover the morality of artifice. With such Traitors, who needs Royalists? ...

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Notes

1. It is this very paradox that has made biographical enterprises such as John Russell Taylor's (1978) and Donald Spoto's (1983) at once so tempting and so troubling.

2. Robin Wood, 'Hitchcock's Films', London 1965, p. 26.

3. Lindsay Anderson, "Alfred Hitchcock", in A. LaValley, ed., 'Focus on Hitchcock', Englewood Cliffs 1972, p. 58.

4. Peter Wollen, "Hitchcock's Vision", in 'Cinema' (GB) no. 3 (June 1969), p. 2.

5. Ibid, p.4.

6. Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock', London 1978, p. 38.

7. Ellen Moers, 'The Dandy', quoted in Martin Green, 'Children of the Sun', New York 1976, p. 9.

8. John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch', London 1978, p. 159.

9. Ibid.

10. Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", in 'Intentions', London 1891, p. 1.

11. Francois Truffaut, 'Hitchcock', London 1967, p. 81.

12. Alfred Hitchcock, "I Wish I Didn't Have to Shoot the Picture", in A. LaValley, op. cit., p. 24.

13. Quoted in Chris Hodenfield, "Murder by the Babbling Brook", in 'Rolling Stone', July 29, 1976, p. 26.

14. See, for instance, Peter Noble, ed., 'BFI Index to the Work of Alfred Hitchcock, London 1949, p. 3: 'I aim to give the public good healthy mental shake-ups. Civilisation has become so screening and sheltering that we cannot experience sufficient thrills at first hand. Therefore, to prevent our becoming sluggish and jellified we have to experience them artificially, and the screen is the best medium for this.'

15. Francois Truffaut, op. cit., p. 112.

16. Quoted in André Bazin, "Hitchcock versus Hitchcock", in A. LaValley, op. cit., p. 64.

17. Francois Truffaut, op. cit., p. 164.

18. Cf R. Mundy, "Another Look at Hitchcock", in 'Cinema' (GB) no. 6/7, p. 11:

> 'The view of Hitchcock as a Catholic moralist is untenable when **I Confess** [1952] is compared to **Downhill** [1927]: public school morality is assigned the same significance as Catholic dogma. The situation where guilt is transferred is what appeals to Hitchcock, and this situation is not necessarily charged with any religious significance. Religion is almost a MacGuffin.'

19. Bellour's most famous article on Hitchcock is his 115-page analysis of **North by Northwest**, "Le Blocage Symbolique", in 'Communications' no. 23, Paris 1975. Available in English are his "**The Birds**: Analysis of a Sequence", mimeograph, The British Film Institute Advisory Service, n.d.; and "Hitchcock, the Enunciator", in 'Camera Obscura' no. 1 (Fall, 1977), pp. 66-91.

20. 'His idea of character is rather primitive.' (Raymond Chandler, quoted in A. LaValley, op. cit., p. 102.)

21. Quoted in Chris Hodenfield, loc. cit., p. 24.

22. Martin Green, op. cit., p. 13.

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Verse

Walters, Timothy M.	Frenzy for a Notorious Artist	10; 26

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Analyses of **Spellbound**, **Foreign Correspondent**; book reviews (e.g. 'Soul in Suspense', 1994 'Hitchcock Annual'); the search for **The Mountain Eagle/Fear o' God/Der Bergadler**; Ron Silver's **Lifepod**.

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'The MacGuffin' thanks the Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales, for its support. This issue printed by TS Press, Collingwood, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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BACK-ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA are $4 each.

Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Young and Innocent** (number 13), **The Paradine Case** (12), **Vertigo** (11), Adrian Martin on **Notorious** (10), Evan Williams on **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). These are the issues most recommended! Earlier, there were issues on **Suspicion** (7), **The Wrong Man** plus Charles Barr on Hitchcock's British Period (6), **Number Seventeen** (5), **Psycho** (4), **The Lodger** (3), **Stage Fright** (2), and **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** (1).

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ODD SPOT: A CASE OF KNOWING TOO LITTLE?

Doris Day's song, 'What will be, will be', in the 1956 version of Hitchcock's **The Man Who Knew Too Much** seems to have been inspired by a couple of successful stage musicals of the time. For one thing, the allusion to fate, destiny, repeats the emphasis on 'kismet' in the musical of that title (filmed by Vincente Minnelli in 1955) - as, on a larger scale, Hitchcock's film itself also does (see 'MacGuffin' 10, p. 5). And the idea of a mother passing on wisdom to her son in the form of a song which she teaches him to both sing and whistle, was anticipated in the 'Whenever I feel afraid' scene early in 'The King and I' (filmed by Walter Lang in 1956, with Deborah Kerr).

But what's odd about Doris Day's song is how it ever came to be called 'Que Sera Sera' (a **French**-language title, which John Michael Hayes's script uses) when Day so clearly gives it the **Italian** pronunciation: 'Che sarà, sarà'. Moreover, the latter is what you'd expect, because Italian is the traditional form of the expression (see, for example, lines 75-76 of Christopher Marlowe's 'Dr Faustus', 1604).

Also, there's another reason. The expression, and its Italian pronunciation, seem themselves to have arrived in Hitch's film via Joseph L. Mankiewitz's **The Barefoot Contessa** (1954). There, it's the family motto of Count Torlato-Favrini, played by Rossano Brazzi.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 15 | February-May 1995 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5 £3

LETTERS

(Editor's note. There's no actual Editorial this time. Apart from the following informative letters, almost the whole issue is given over to an analysis of **Spellbound**. In his book, 'Hitchcock and Selznick', Leonard J. Leff claims of Hitchcock's film that it represents 'one of the best - and most 'Hitchcockian' - screenplays of' its director's career. Not everyone would agree. By all means, write and tell us **your** views ... To everyone, good viewing - Ken.)

Sidney Gottlieb, English Department, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

Thanks very much for sending me a copy of 'The MacGuffin'. I am already an avid reader (I share copies with a friend), and I always find many items of interest in each issue. I am particularly interested in the way you and your contributors widen the Hitchcock milieu. I may not (yet!) be convinced of the Schopenhauer connection, but I find extremely valuable your MANY references to novelists that form an essential part of Hitchcock's background (and foreground!) as a filmmaker. Hitchcock was, as he always insisted, primarily cinematic. But he was also literate and literary, and these latter subjects deserve all the attention they can get, especially as they are intimately related to the former!

(Editor's note. For the record, Hitchcock was a friend of at least two notable figures in English literature: the poet C. Day-Lewis, who wrote detective fiction as 'Nicholas Blake', and the short-story writer and critic, Sir Victor Pritchett, who contributed script suggestions for **The Birds**. I thank Professor Gottlieb for his letter - which also contains the welcome news that Professor Gottlieb's own book as editor, 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews', is forthcoming from the University of California Press/ Faber and Faber.)

* * *

Timothy Walters, Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA

I was very impressed by Thomas Elsaesser's piece in 'MacGuffin' 14.

Americans who subscribe to cable television or own a satellite dish are familiar with the Arts & Entertainment Network. One of its regular features is 'Biography', a one-hour documentary series. A segment devoted to Alfred Hitchcock was aired in 1994. This video biography includes a few interview clips with The Master, as well as some of his home-movie footage. There are no new revelations for the serious Hitchcock student, but it's an entertaining encapsulation of Hitch's life and career. There are comments from Patricia Hitchcock, Ernest Lehman, Norman Lloyd, Richard Schickel and others. This 50-minute programme is available on video from the A&E Network.

* * *

John L. Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

Re **Elstree Calling** and Ed Buscombe's letter in 'MacGuffin' 14. We should really straighten out the matter of Hitchcock's contribution to this wretched film! It's important for the Filmography. Your 'editor's note' indicates that you, yourself, and in person, believe that Hitchcock directed the Calthrop-Wong episode. I don't want to insult you by questioning the basis of this belief, but I **would**

like to know how you know that. If such a fact were confirmed, think of all the gender studies that would come of it, and all the Assistant Professors of English in the US whose tenure would be more assured because they could create a new feminist book on Hitchcock. (It's easier to have students watch movies than to motivate them to read 'Paradise Lost'.) ... And, after all, wouldn't the Director remember directing Anna May Wong?

(Editor's note. I thank John Kuhns for his letter, which goes on to note, with considerable zest, the apparent discrepancies in Donald Spoto's three accounts of the film. And I must own up that I have only lately seen the film in its entirety. My attributing the burlesque of 'Taming of the Shrew' to Hitchcock was based on mere conventional wisdom, i.e. hearsay. But now, briefly, here are my thoughts. The film's titles credit 'sketches and other interpolated items' to Hitchcock. By contrast, the 'ensemble numbers' are credited to the performers involved; and overall direction is attributed to Adrian Brunel. Next, the 'Taming of the Shrew' burlesque is the film's culminating sketch - and to my eyes has several Hitchcockian touches: e.g. the escalation involved when Donald Calthrop first 'tames' - with a whip - a truculent motorbike and then **tries** to tame an even more truculent Anna May Wong. Note the near-surrealism. But Anna May Wong herself is only on-screen for a matter of seconds. So I don't think it's necessarily significant that Hitchcock never spoke of her later. Personally, I'm happy to think that Hitchcock directed this - and several other - parts of **Elstree Calling**.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Remembering film history

This issue of 'The MacGuffin' pays tribute, in effect, to the 50th anniversary of the release of Hitchcock's **Spellbound**, one of the first commercial films to deal in an integral way with psychoanalysis. (In Europe, there had already been 'art films' that dealt with similar matters, such as G.W. Pabst's 1926 **Secrets of a Soul** and Werner Hochbaum's 1935 **The Eternal Mask**.)

But as 1995 is being celebrated as the 100th anniversary of cinema itself, it's nice to note that someone is still alive who attended one of the original Lumière screenings. Recently, the world's oldest person celebrated her 120th birthday by reminiscing about the time in 1888 she sold crayons to Vincent Van Gogh - whom she remembers as 'ugly as sin ... bad-tempered and smelly' - and the trip she made in 1895 to a 'movie-hall' where she saw **L'Arroseur arrosé** (**The Hoser hosed**) ...

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APOLOGIES/ BLOOPERS

No less than three apologies to Adrian Martin. First, his article on some recent Hitchcock-derivative movies has had to be held over (along with some of our regular features, such as 'Book Reviews'), for lack of space. Second, his selection of best new releases/screenings of 1994 has also had to be held over. Third, the 'Contents' index for issues 9-12, which we printed last time, gave a wrong page-reference for Adrian's long article on **Notorious** in 'MacGuffin' 10. The correct page-reference reads 'pages 14-25'. Also, to some other recent would-be contributors, we say: please be patient. Your pieces should appear next time.

The 'academic in Oregon' who has done considerable work on the Schopenhauer-Woody Allen connection ('MacGuffin' 14, p. 4) actually lives in Seattle, Washington. Apologies to Dr Don Miller for 're-locating' him.

And we were wrong last time to say (p. 13) that at one point in Hitchcock's **Spellbound**, Dr Brulov thinks that the winged figure in Ballyntine's dream may refer to himself. A more accurate reading of the **Spellbound** dream appears later in this issue.

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Their Way: Hitchcock's 'Spellbound' (1945)

> Freud maintained that frustration of the libidinal drive was the cause of anxiety; although the most primitive of all forms of anxiety he ascribed to the individual's experience of the normal process of human birth.
>
> - David Stafford-Clark, 'What Freud Really Said' (1967), p. 122

> ... the cosmic anguish of 'space-time'.
>
> - Jacques Dopagne, 'Dali' (1974)

> 'We have the word "white" on our side.'
>
> - Constance Petersen to John Ballyntine, in **Spellbound**

1. Fathers

Essential reading on **Spellbound** includes articles by Andrew Britton (1986) and James Bigwood (1991),[1] but I'd like to start by commending Raymond Durgnat's sensible remarks in his book, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (1974). Here's how he summarises the film:

> The asylum's [i.e. Green Manors's] current director, Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll), is due for retirement. His replacement is to be one Dr Edwardes, whom John Ballyntine[2] (Gregory Peck) impersonates and whom he comes to believe that he has killed. But Constance (Ingrid Bergman) takes him to the analyst who analysed her and he ascertains that Ballyntine is suffering from (1) guilt at seeing his younger brother's death while playing as a child, and (2) its reinforcement by witnessing the death of the man whom he pretends to be, and whose real murderer turns out to be Dr Murchison. Obviously, in analytical terms, Murchison is the evil father-figure, angry at being supplanted, and Constance's analyst, her father-figure, [whose name is Dr Brulov,] is the kindly father-figure, willing to yield the mother-figure to the son.[3]

Obvious or not, I think the point Durgnat makes here is crucial. So let's not lose sight of it, notwithstanding that Britton would add that both Murchison **and** Brulov are finally 'guilty', inasmuch that they both urge 'repression and sublimation as a cure for [Constance's] attachment to Ballyntine'.[4] I'll come back to this.

Further, notice that Durgnat in fact makes a double point about Brulov's role: that he's Constance's ('good') father-figure and that he's the kindly father-figure of Ballyntine, her patient and suitor. That Brulov is a surrogate father to Constance seems beyond any doubt. In the original novel, 'The House of Dr Edwardes' (1927), by 'Francis Beeding', Constance lands her first doctor's job when the head of Château Landry (cum Green Manors) offers her a position: what's significant about this is that he had been a friend of her father, 'dead these twenty years'.[5] Just as significantly, in the film we're told that it's Brulov who had got Constance the Green Manors job.

As for Brulov's willingness, or otherwise, to 'yield' Constance when the time comes, it helps to notice that he's one of several similarly-placed 'fathers' in Hitchcock's films - some more amenable than others. Three such figures are Colonel Burgoyne in **Young and Innocent** (1937), the blind Philip Martin in **Saboteur** (1942) and Professor Lindt in **Torn Curtain** (1966). Of these, the eminent - and irascible - scientist, Lindt, resembles Brulov in more ways than just having white hair and a goatee beard! But also, let's recall how a key scene in **Torn Curtain** requires its young American physicist, Michael Armstrong, the fiancé of Sarah Sherman (in whom Lindt has shown a perhaps more than fatherly interest), to **trick** the older man of his superior scientific knowledge ...

By contrast, in **Young and Innocent**, Robert Tisdall has only to finally prove himself worthy of Erica Burgoyne's love and trust before her policeman father, a most pleasant man, acknowledges Tisdall as his heir-apparent (see 'MacGuffin' 13). Even so, there's a certain cosy incestuousness, a sense of 'keeping it all in the family', about this resolution.[6] Below, I'll discuss the significance of Brulov's twice-uttered remark in **Spellbound**, that 'any husband of Constance is a husband of mine, so to speak'.

That leaves Philip Martin in **Saboteur**. He is, in fact, the **most** readily yielding of all these 'Oedipal' father-figures. Could anyone forget the moment, just halfway through the film, when he bids Barry Kane to take care of his niece Pat Martin and 'go and do the things I cannot do'?

Now, something else to notice about all these prospective fathers-in-law (real or symbolic) is that they're either widowers or bachelors. It's not exactly clear which category Brulov belongs to, though we may guess that he has lost his wife in the War. (He's Russian.) In any event, he describes himself as 'living on my own with a can-opener'. The point is, each of these men has a reason to feel that his 'macho' image has been undercut. In the case of the gentle and wise Philip Martin, I'm tempted to say that he's potentially what Camille Paglia calls a 'Teiresias' figure, the male mother. Though Paglia cites television talk-show hosts as a modern example, the original Teiresias of Greek legend was, of course, the blind prophet who told Oedipus the truth about his crime ...[7]

The two irascible scientists, Brulov and Lindt, are a different matter! We readily sense that neither of them will **yield** any part of his virility without a fight. Of Brulov, notice that he wears assertively patterned ties, and carries a pipe and tobacco pouch; that at one point, when a rival psychiatrist - the ubiquitous Edwardes - is mentioned, he angrily waves a knife; and that near the end of the film, we see him gripping his metal-headed cane. On the other hand, there's a great difference between these symbolic gestures of Brulov's and Dr Murchison's actual resort to **murder** to try and retain his position as 'patriarch' of Green Manors. Let's not lose sight of that, either.

2. Forces

Despite **Spellbound**'s innovation, then, in being one of the first films to deal with psychoanalysis - something of which Hitchcock and his scriptwriter Ben Hecht were very aware - it also reworked ingredients from earlier films. For instance, an older man's fear of being supplanted, and his being driven to murder, is the same basic situation that we find in **Young and Innocent**; in both films, too, a younger man is suspected of the crime, and must go on the run with his girl, who works assiduously to try and clear him.

Then there's what I'll call the thrust of **Spellbound**'s imagery. Many of the images have their own precedents in Hitchcock's films. To see both these things, let's take the credits-sequence. As the credits unroll, they do so over a view of a tree whose leaves are blowing away. Simultaneously, Miklos Rozsa's score imitates the wind, most elaborately in an eerie passage played on the theremin; it's the same passage that will accompany the onset of each of Ballyntine's anxiety-attacks from the time he meets Constance. In fact, it's one of the score's main motifs. But here it's soon followed by the equally important love theme, then by various complications, foreshadowing how in this film love's course will indeed be difficult.

Now, the image of leaves blowing from a tree has its most obvious precedent in the opening scene of **Number Seventeen** (1932), where on a windy autumn night a man chases his hat along a street ... But that episode, I'd suggest, is little more than a neat piece of scene-setting and a plot-device (cf the windmills sequence in **Foreign Correspondent**, 1940). Whereas, the allusion to Nature we're given at the start of **Spellbound** seems to invoke an altogether different order of film, one going back to **The Manxman** (1929). The latter, the last of Hitchcock's silent features, opens with a brief view of waves pounding a coast, followed by a tranquil scene of fishing-boats returning to port, their sails hanging limp ...

Next, here's a related matter. **Spellbound**'s chill wind may be opposed by the **warmth** of love, yet we sense that the outcome is uncertain. In both **The Manxman** and **Rebecca** (1940), the cold hand of the past threatens to constrain the characters' happiness indefinitely. Indeed, when **Rebecca**'s narrator, in that film's opening scene, describes how 'Nature had come into her own again ... with [her] long tenacious fingers', this is at once true of what we see on-screen at that moment and emblematic of the malign power we'll feel working throughout.

Malignity is also the keynote of **Jamaica Inn** (1939). Its first shot is of a weather-beaten inn-sign. Then a printed legend occupies the screen, though twice its lettering is 'erased' by fierce waves. All of which anticipates the credit-titles of **The Birds** (1963), whose words are **pecked** away by swooping birds. In contrast, an intended titles-sequence for **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) would have been **benign**

in mood. It was going to show, in speeded-up motion, the budding and maturing of a maple-leaf to its full autumn splendour.[8] This last fact may remind us that the action of **The Trouble With Harry**, like the Green Manors scenes of **Spellbound**, is set in Vermont in autumn/fall ...

That should do. I've listed these several shows of 'natural' force in Hitchcock's films because they begin to suggest what's at stake in **Spellbound**. In previous 'MacGuffins', I've described how Saul Bass's titles, with Bernard Herrmann's scoring, for films like **North by Northwest** (1959) and **Psycho** (1960) convey a more generalised force.[9] Altogether, I think we're talking of something very like what the philosopher Schopenhauer called 'Will', or life-energy. It's not unconnected with 'suspense', of course. Also in previous 'MacGuffins',[10] I've noted how an audience engages with a Hitchcock film in a near-libidinous way - to the extent that when an aging Roger Thornhill in **North by Northwest** tells us that he has 'never felt more alive', the feeling should be mutual ...

The point, for **Spellbound** specifically, is that all its on-screen action - involving contending father-figures, intense love-affairs and just considerable frustration - may find an echo in our own world where such things aren't exactly unknown - if only in our nightly dreaming. The reciprocity of **Spellbound**'s world and that of its audience is certainly one of the themes of this article. It takes its cue from the quotation that follows the film's credit-titles, a quotation from 'Julius Caesar': 'The fault ... is not in our stars,/ But in ourselves ...'.

3. Fears

I haven't forgotten Freud, by the way. But **Spellbound** is more than Freud, just as Schopenhauer's Will is more than Freud's 'Unconscious', and Jung's use of the term 'libido' extends Freud's use of it - yet **all** these concepts overlap.[11] Likewise, Freud's attributing the cause of anxiety to 'frustration of the libidinal drive' is helpful, but it's hardly the last word on the nature of fear and anxiety.

Let's combine Freud and Schopenhauer for a moment. Schopenhauer wrote that 'the sexual impulse' is 'the kernel of ... all willing',[12] but he stressed that the nature of willing is such that we're forever dissatisfied, and in danger of falling into a state of languor or boredom.[13] His view of human beings has been summed up as implying how we're 'caught between the Scylla of willing and the Charybdis of boredom'.[14]

That's about as good a description of the predicament of the typical Hitchcock protagonist as you'll get! Think of **Rear Window** (1954), where Jefferies finds himself sunk in a 'swamp of boredom' and virtually **wills** something to happen. Then, with considerable libido - some of it the audience's - riding on the outcome, he becomes **frustrated** when nobody at first believes his story of what he's seen. In effect, he's like the child who witnesses Freud's 'primal scene' - the parents' love-making - and for a long while thereafter feels puzzled and excluded, and therefore anxious.[15] Also, note the 'Oedipal' implications. For both Jefferies and the audience, then, the situation is doubly suspenseful, combining past and present torments.

Spellbound follows a similar pattern. As we'll see, the Green Manors scenes involve both a state of boredom and a condition of sexual frustration, neatly symbolised in the opening card game. (For Schopenhauer, and very possibly Hitchcock, card-playing expresses 'the wretched side of humanity', i.e. of people subjected to sustained boredom.)[16] And yet, once again, none of this may feel wholly unfamiliar to us. Not for nothing, surely, did an early draft of **Spellbound** have the Green Manors inmates staging numerous rehearsals of Congreve's comedy of self-interest, and frustrated marriage, 'The Way of the World'.[17]

Another source of anxiety for both **Spellbound**'s characters and audience is, naturally, the matter of Ballyntine's amnesia. Is he a murderer, or not? What traumatic event did he once see? But there seems to be a further and more general cause of anxiety, one resembling that 'cosmic anguish of "space-time"' invoked by Jacques Dopagne in his book on Salvador Dali.[18] On this matter, Schopenhauer is undoubtedly an authority. He tells us that 'space-time' (his term) is **subjective**, the very **principium individuationis** whereby we each try to make sense of the phenomenal world and our place in it.[19] He doesn't refer to the 'anguish', exactly, that such cognition may entail, but it's implicit in how he builds his whole philosophy on the opposition between phenomenon ('Representation') and noumenon (Will),

and on the twofold cause of human suffering: the blind, indifferent striving of Will itself and our **separation**, intellectually, from absolute knowledge of that Will. I think that it's the latter aspect of suffering that is most 'Daliesque' - and an essential element in **Spellbound**. But because I've touched before on this particular matter, i.e. the entrapment of Hitchcock's characters in their subjective worlds, when I've written on such films as **The Wrong Man** (1957, in 'MacGuffin' 6), **Vertigo** ('MacGuffin' 11) and **Torn Curtain** ('MacGuffin' 8), this time I'll just give some instances.

Most obviously, there's the dream-sequence, 'based on designs by ... Dali', as the credits tell us. In particular, there's what the storyboard calls 'a weird deserted place'[20] where we see Ballyntine running; and there's the background Dali provided for the section of the dream where a masked figure on a roof hides behind a chimney. In both these cases of - an almost palpable - 'space-time' anguish, note the distinctive Dali landscape: a vast alluvial plain, a massive cracked tor or crag, one or two scattered boulders typically so smooth and worn they're like eggs. Also, in the dream's 'gambling-house' episode, note how lines of perspective drawn on the floor and background extend the view to infinity, both in front and (by means of a reverse-shot) behind.[21]

In turn, the dream refers to other locales in the film: Green Manors, New York, Gabriel Valley. Each of these places has both a 'representative' and a 'symbolic' function (matters discussed below), but also contributes to an overall meaning related to 'space-time' anguish. So it isn't fortuitous when the drunk from Pittsburgh whom we see in the foyer of the Empire State Hotel complains, 'A fella could live and die in this town and couldn't meet nobody.'

He's an interesting person, this drunk. (Less so, his equivalent in the novel: an 'offensive young man' who annoys Constance when she first sets out for Château Landry.)[22] He parodies not only a cosmic anguish but also the other main type of anxiety, i.e. that caused by frustrated libido. Once he sees Constance, not even the hotel house-detective can easily dissuade him from his single-minded purpose! Of course, most of the anxiety/anguish involved is felt by Constance, who is trying to find Ballyntine in this huge building. As her name may tell us, she has a single-minded purpose of her own, though it concerns mainly her **love** - an exalted form of libido - for her patient.[23] (**His** name suggests 'valentine' ...) Moreover, it practically goes without saying that our own 'libido' is thoroughly engaged, and with it our suspenseful interest in what happens. In other words, whatever anxieties and hopes the characters feel are shared by us - a case of what I've previously called Hitchcock's subjective-technique. **Spellbound**, in fact, may be the very best illustration of its master director and story-teller's ability to put us at film-centre and keep us there, using all manner of devices.[24]

With that last point in mind, let's now work through the film from where we left off, i.e. as the credits end.

4. Indoors, out of the cold

A long-shot of Green Manors shows it to be a country mansion with a wide lawn. There are no high walls: Durgnat's term 'asylum' is somewhat misleading. In the foreground, leaves blow along a road past the entrance-gate which has knobbed gate-posts (see below). Superimposed over the shot is Shakespeare's, 'The fault is ... in ourselves ...'.

A dissolve brings us to the front door. Aptly, another superimposed title tells us that the psychoanalyst seeks 'to open the locked doors of 'the patient's mind and to drive out 'the devils of unreason ... from the human soul'. A second dissolve discloses a comfortable, **warm** drawing-room (note the potted fern on a mantelpiece) where some women at a table are playing cards.

It's an exemplary Hitchcock opening. In terms of subjective-technique, the transition from chilly outdoors to warm interior anticipates, notably, the start of **Torn Curtain**, where a similar progression virtually lands us in bed with the hero and heroine. That the same progression invites an analogy with (1) the audience's recent entry into the cinema, seeking entertainment, and (2) various Freudian notions (e.g. return to the womb), is hardly likely to have escaped Hitchcock's notice.

Even more notably, both a 'cold/warm' motif and a 'doors' motif anticipate **Marnie** (1964) - whose 'doors' references are used with particular ingenuity to project its heroine's shut-out condition and to mark

stages in her 'therapy'. But **Spellbound** is ingenious, too. Its many shots of thresholds and corridors echo the title of the book by the missing Dr Edwardes (whom Ballyntine, in his amnesiac state, impersonates), a book called 'The Labyrinth of the Guilt Complex'. In turn, the film posits an ultimate freedom, symbolised by what lies behind the last door of all: a radiant whiteness. Here, obviously, I'm referring to the celebrated shot of doors opening one after another, a shot representing 'first love'; but the radiant whiteness we glimpse there soon accrues any number of further associations.

Constance at one point says, 'We have the word "white" on our side.' Wisely, the filmmakers never disclose whether it's a chimera she's driving at. They merely encourage us to speculate. Certainly a 'religious' reading is **permitted** from the moment the film speaks of 'devils' being driven 'from the human soul'. Later, Brulov (Michael Chekhov) tells Ballyntine that the problem of the dream-analyst is to 'find out what the devil you are trying to say to yourself'. In Hitchcock's films, devils are often opposed to their traditional foes, angels. And vice versa. For example, at the start of **Foreign Correspondent**, the film is dedicated to 'those [eponymous] guardian angels', one of whom is promptly dispatched by his editor in New York to a 'bedevilled' Europe. In **Spellbound**, Constance is sceptical at first of poets who compare love to 'a symphony orchestra and a flight of angels', yet almost the final twist in the mystery surrounding Ballyntine will be associated with the ski-resort called Gabriel Valley (after the **Archangel** Gabriel). Notice the hinting at whiteness, the traditional colour of angels.

On the other hand, the very first image we're shown when we arrive inside Green Manors - the image of card-players - may give us pause. In Expressionism, which is another salient influence on **Spellbound**, all forms of gambling are 'escapist' and 'pessimistic'. Is life, then, just a lottery? Or, if Hitchcock's world permits a God, is He anything other than the Joycean one, 'aloof, paring His fingernails'? At the end of the film, Murchison will interpret the 'gambling-house' part of Ballyntine's dream, where people are seen playing with blank cards, as an attempt by the patient 'to **deny** it was a gambling-house' (my emphasis). He'll add that 'the dream gives the locale a double identity', i.e. both Green Manors and New York. In Expressionist terms, New York, with its Empire State Building (then the world's tallest), its Twenty-One Club and its several vast railway stations, has already been defined for us as both the hub of the world and a place of winners **and** losers (e.g. Constance and the drunk, respectively). Significantly, when Constance finally locates Ballyntine, it's by means of the hotel's card-index of its guests ...

5. Who wears the pants?

One of the patients we see playing cards in the drawing-room of Green Manors is Miss Carmichael (Rhonda Fleming). She belongs to the category of women Hitchcock dubbed 'Mediterranean', and whose sexuality (he would add, drily) is 'all on display'. She's about to confront her alter ego, Constance, who initially represents '**Nordic**' femininity at its most stifled, even frigid. We hear a nurse's voice tell her that 'Dr Petersen is ready for you', and she affects to apologise to the other card-players, adding that she's leaving 'a perfect hand - would have beaten the pants off you.' This incident, which reprises playing-card references in **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Lifeboat** (both 1943, and both featuring perfect hands), nevertheless manages to tell us a lot about Miss Carmichael herself - especially after we've heard her complain to Constance that 'psychoanalysis bores the pants off me'. (Like many Hitchcock characters, she seems given to repetition-compulsion.) No doubt, undressing everybody is her idea of the ultimate 'cure' for all ailments, **including** boredom. In the meantime, she isn't the only person in the film to resent giving up something 'perfect', and to show ambivalence or confusion about her/his gender identity or gender role ...

The nurse whispers to the attendant, Harry, assigned to bring Miss Carmichael to Constance, 'Watch her carefully - don't take your eyes off her.' (The reference to eyes is just one of several in the Green Manors scenes.) But Harry still lets himself be taken in! Outside Constance's door, Miss Carmichael pretends that she's going to kiss him, then scratches the back of his hand. Here, there's a foretaste of how, early in **Marnie**, Mark Rutland sees fit to liken the misandrist Marnie to a jaguarundi!

Moreover, you soon suspect that Constance herself is no less frigid than Marnie in the scenes before Mark 'tames' her. Miss Carmichael calls her 'Miss Frozen-puss'. Further, she wears glasses (like the repressed Lina at the start of **Suspicion**, 1941) and she smokes a cigarette in a long, i.e. 'phallic', holder. To another patient, Mr Garmes (Norman Lloyd), she'll say that she's very capable of opening her

own mail. With or without the implied symbolism (cf Lina's and Marnie's purses), we readily believe her - besides noting that she's protecting Garmes from a shiny, knife-like letter opener. If Miss Carmichael is evidently a man-hater (preferring to undress only women?), Garmes is a **self**-hater, who believes erroneously that he killed his father. Clearly, these two patients represent, in an extreme form, aspects of Constance and Ballyntine respectively.

Of course, Hitchcock and Hecht treat it all very lightly at first. Hence the script gives Constance's colleague, the 'amorous' Dr Fleurot, plenty of opportunity to mock her bookishness and her lack of 'inside information' about love. But in an exchange that recalls Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas in Lubitsch's **Ninotchka** (1939), she rejects his advances out of hand: 'You sense only your own desires and pulsations - I assure you mine in no way resemble them.'

In these early scenes, Constance's room is like a railway station. (I use that image advisedly - it suggests her as-yet lack of deep commitment to another person.) Someone else who comes to her door is the about-to-retire head of Green Manors, Murchison. He 'marches in' unannounced or, rather, self-announced - a neat touch, this, imitated by Kenneth Branagh's **Dead Again** (1991), whose own villain makes a similar first-entrance. The effect is doubtless subliminal, but it leaves us feeling that the character hasn't been vouched for. (By contrast, when we later meet Brulov, he has been well-heralded by the admiring Constance.) Afterwards, we can congratulate ourselves in the very words Murchison at one point uses of Ballyntine: 'I felt something wrong from the moment our man appeared.'[25]

Murchison has come to say that his successor, Dr Edwardes, is due at any moment. But he assures Constance - who seems relieved - that he himself won't be leaving straight away. In one of Hitchcock's most-used lines of the 1940s (cf **Rebecca** and **The Paradine Case**), he tells her that he'll 'hover around for a while - like an old mother hen'. Earlier, I noted Brulov's fight to maintain his virility. In this, he again anticipates his counterpart in **Torn Curtain**, Lindt, whom we hear impatiently mock his aging colleagues for their 'cluck-clucking'! But now we can see that in **Spellbound** the matter extends across the board. The hangdog patient Garmes is unmanned by his guilt-complex, and so, incipiently, is Ballyntine. Likewise, if Miss Carmichael is confused about which sex wears the pants, the excessively bookish, i.e. intellectual, Constance is also in danger of not developing **her** femininity.

Before I draw parallels with some situations in other Hitchcock films, and elsewhere, there's a concealed aspect of this scene that needs mentioning. Murchison is 'in love' with Constance, and she, probably unconsciously, with him. (In the novel, the pair do indeed make love after he has exploited a momentary terror on her part to press his mouth on hers: cf Mark Rutland's seduction of Marnie during a thunderstorm.)[26] In other words, given that Murchison is the villainous father-figure, what we have here is a situation of 'incest' between a possessive 'father' and his 'daughter', such as Theodore Price discusses at length in 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992). That situation may tell us why Green Manors, despite its vital-sounding name, can be no more revivifying for now than Muir Woods in **Vertigo** (see 'MacGuffin' 11). Deep down, something is terribly wrong - or 'unnatural'.[27] Even Edwardes's murder was perhaps only a symptom. Likewise, it's symptomatic when Fleurot tells Constance that her work is 'brilliant but lifeless - there's no intuition in it'.

Now, in 'MacGuffin' 12, I noted how both Manderley in **Rebecca** and Hindley Hall in **The Paradine Case** have been 'blighted' and their present occupants 'desexed'. It's a literally classic situation, present also in such Hitchcock films as **Jamaica Inn** (whose Sir Humphrey Pengallen is yet another character concerned for his virility) and **Vertigo** (whose murderous father-figure, Gavin Elster, devastates several lives). Two films by other directors that depict roughly comparable situations are Robert Wiene's **The Cabinet of Dr Caligari** (1919) and Alain Resnais's **Last Year at Marienbad** (1961). Arguably, Luis Bunuel's **The Exterminating Angel** (1962) is a third.

But further, you can find analogues in fairy tale (e.g. 'Sleeping Beauty'), legend (e.g. the Arthurian account of the Dolorous Stroke), poetry (e.g. 'The Waste Land') and drama (e.g. 'Hamlet' - whose 'Oedipal' explications, by Freud and Dr Ernest Jones, are famous) ... Hence, coming back to the aptly-named **Spellbound**, we may sense how it shows us another case of the time being 'out of joint'. Yet there's an important difference. In order to set matters right, the filmmakers have empowered not a Hamlet or an Oedipus, exactly, but psychoanalysis. And love.

6. Who rules?

Not forgetting to keep the audience at film-centre, the film shows Constance watching through a window as the car carrying 'Dr Edwardes' pulls up outside: immediately afterwards, there's what is obviously a subjective-shot - which we naturally take to be Constance's point of view. In fact, Hitchcock may be giving us the view from the staffroom downstairs, for the next shot shows several of Constance's colleagues **also** watching through a window. Such a 'seamless' transition maintains the audience's level of involvement for the key moment when 'Edwardes'/Ballyntine, enters the staffroom.[28] Also, it makes a further subliminal statement or two (e.g. about Constance's aloofness, not yet abandoned).

Hard on Ballyntine's heels, Murchison appears at the staffroom door. Now begins one of the great 'bluffing' scenes in movies. Murchison professes to be both pleased to see Ballyntine and surprised at his youthfulness. Actually, he has seen him twice before: once at the Twenty-One Club in New York, where Ballyntine had been dining with the real Edwardes, and once in Gabriel Valley, where Ballyntine and Edwardes had been skiing when Murchison followed them there and shot Edwardes. Why he didn't also shoot Ballyntine while he was about it is never established. True, the dream-sequence will suggest that Murchison was masked at the time, and therefore not identifiable, but he could hardly have been masked when he confronted Edwardes in New York. And he certainly couldn't have known beforehand that Ballyntine would not remember either of these events! Nor could he have known that Ballyntine, a doctor, would assume the dead man's identity, even going so far as to take up Edwardes's appointment as head of Green Manors. When I said that this is one of the great 'bluffing' scenes in movies, I was allowing the filmmakers their share.

The main point is, Murchison's show of cheerfulness when greeting Ballyntine in the staffroom must conceal the real feelings of a deeply frustrated and frightened man. Of course, the audience as yet knows nothing of this. Only later, in hindsight, does the film's mythic- or dream-level, if you will, assert itself. Then, Murchison's fear of being supplanted - of having to give up his own 'perfect hand' as patriarch of Green Manors - appears central. And we see how the film in these early scenes has started to weave a very rich tapestry indeed.

In a way, both Edwardes and Ballyntine must seem to Murchison to resemble the tribal sons envisaged by Freud in 'Totem and Taboo' (1914). In a kind of 'Oedipal' fantasy, Freud there describes how the sons lie in wait for the chance to kill the father-leader. Then again, the film seems to hark back to Sir James Frazer's 'The Golden Bough' (1890) itself - the latter was clearly an influence on Freud's thinking.[29] When Murchison apologises to Ballyntine because he doesn't 'know the formal words for an abdication', you think of the famous opening passage in Frazer's work, which describes the anxiety felt by the aging 'King of the Wood'. It tells how, in a sacred grove outside Rome,

> grew a certain tree round which at any time of day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. ... He was a priest and a murderer, and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. ... The post which he held by this precarious tenure carried with it the title of king; but surely no crowned head ever lay uneasier, or was visited by more evil dreams, than his.[30]

The King of the Wood was the incarnation of the spirit of vegetation, and the reputed source of natural abundance and fertility; if his vital energies were allowed to decline, those of Nature itself would decline with them.[31]

Given all this, it may be useful to add that the Francis Beeding novel includes at least two parody-scenes of fertility ritual: a haymaking celebration by the Château Landry inmates, and episodes involving human and animal sacrifice at an altar in a wood.[32] These scenes parallel how the novel has its satanic Dr Murchison wear crosses on the soles of his feet in order to mock the crucifixion (see Truffaut's 'Hitchcock'). In any case, now we can see just why Green Manors at present remains something of a 'waste land'. Its custodian has grown weak, and keeps his position only by evil and cunning. True, the inmates do seem to be flourishing after a fashion - like ferns in a hothouse - but another of the film's subliminal messages is that their welfare is being put at hazard.

7. Transferences

Miss Carmichael had thrown a book at Constance, but matters really start to escalate when Garmes attacks Dr Fleurot and tries to cut his own throat. Ironically, this happens soon after the newly love-smitten Constance and Ballyntine have been out exploring the countryside. It looks as if what Fleurot calls the 'icepack' on Constance's head may have begun to melt, but only to release new perils. Such a pattern will repeat itself several times in the film: as Hitchcock once said in a different context, 'even the word "love" can be made to sound sinister'.[33] In this instance, a clue to what's happening may be found in how Garmes is **Ballyntine**'s alter ego ...

Characteristically, the outdoors sequence begins on a light note. Ballyntine, quoting Groucho Marx, has just told Constance that she's suffering from 'mogo on the gogo',[34] and has prescribed fresh air. But Hitchcock is careful hereabouts to keep matters within bounds: what we see of Vermont's fields and groves lacks charm (something that worried producer David Selznick).[35] There's even a moment when the couple must negotiate an unromantic tangle of barbed wire. Such direction on Hitchcock's part accords with (1) the dampening 'waste land' metaphor, yet (2) the couple's comical over-estimation of the view, as well as (3) the film's succession of barbed or pronged objects, and (4) the **full-blown** love scene and its dramatic interruption that follow almost immediately.

That love scene is the one where Constance comes upstairs at night, sees a light under Ballyntine's door, and enters his room. She'll repeat the trip at the end of the film, only then the room's occupant will be Murchison. Given the often Freudian symbolism of staircases (see article on **Suspicion** in 'MacGuffin' 7), and the matter of Constance's 'love' for Murchison, these two scenes are pivotal. (So, too, is a third staircase-related episode, in Brulov's house, which I'll discuss later.) For added measure, the present scene includes the 'opening-doors' shot - accompanied by Rozsa's notoriously trembling violins. However, the shot has scarcely ended before Ballyntine recoils from the sight of dark lines on Constance's white negligee, and we hear the same eerie motif that during the credits had accompanied the image of wind-blown leaves. His reaction carries an early hint of how the couple's very relationship will blow both hot and cold; in effect, it marks the onset of what psychiatrists call 'the transference'.[36] Freud had shown how a subject's attitudes to parental figures are revived during the analyst-patient relationship, which is noted for its 'instinctual ambivalence'. That's to say, there's a transference onto the analyst of both affectionate and hostile feelings, closely linked to the 'positive' and 'negative' components of the Oedipus complex.[37]

Complicating matters further, the dark lines that make Ballyntine so anxious will be shown later in the film to remind him of his younger brother's death at an age when both boys, emerging from the 'Oedipal' phase, would have recently experienced intense 'sibling rivalry'.

Next, immediately after Ballyntine's strange reaction, the telephone starts ringing shrilly. He answers it, to hear that Garmes has run amok and is in surgery. In effect, Garmes's guilt-feelings have led him to behave in a way that the look on Ballyntine's face has just suggested that, sooner or later, **he** might do. The view dissolves to an operating theatre.

Here there's another 'white radiance' like the one we glimpsed behind the opening doors. When Ballyntine sees Garmes, he starts babbling about how 'it's dark' in the corridor and how 'you can't keep people in cells'. Yet what he says merely asserts his new glimpse of freedom. Simultaneously, the intense whiteness contains for him a further reminder of death: that of Edwardes in the snow. This oxymoron - prospect of freedom and reminder of death - sufficiently explains his collapsing in a faint right there in the operating theatre. Whether his fainting is also due to how he can't face having to operate on Garmes because, deep down, he's a homosexual - as Theodore Price has suggested - seems to me dubious (like Price's contention that Maxim in **Rebecca** is not just impotent but gay - see 'MacGuffin' 12). On the other hand, from what's already been said above, you can't dismiss the possibility out of hand.

For the film's audience, and perhaps Ballyntine, the operating theatre may carry further reminders: e.g. of the time when we were born, when all our anxieties began. Certainly the scene at Gabriel Valley will represent a form of 'rebirthing'. Before that, at Brulov's house, Ballyntine will undergo a symbolic anaesthesia, such as Garmes has just experienced. It will be followed by Ballyntine's dream, representing yet another birth/rebirth ...

But let's not fail to notice the sheer drama of all this. The way in which the film piles incident upon incident, such as in the hectic few moments that elapse between the kissing ('opening-doors') scene and the operating-theatre scene, makes for classic Hitchcock - and classic Rozsa, despite those violins! To a 1945 viewer, in particular, watching the film and responding to its power must have felt rather like being subject to post-hypnotic suggestion! It's fascinating to imagine the excitement of the original audiences who saw the film at New York's huge Radio City Music Hall. And let's not forget that World War II had just ended, releasing its own swirling store of emotion, which Hitchcock's film taps (e.g. its reference to how Ballyntine had been shot down over Rome; its general optimism).

8. Submission

Decamping from Green Manors, Ballyntine and Constance end up at Brulov's house in suburban Rochester. By this time, the police know that Ballyntine is an impostor and that the real Edwardes has disappeared. Though the couple pretend to be newly-married, Brulov quickly guesses the truth - that they're on the run - but doesn't let on at first.[38] He invites them to stay with him.

Awaking towards dawn, Ballyntine goes into the bathroom to shave, but becomes disturbed by the general whiteness and by the sight of dark lines in a mug of shaving lather. Clutching an open razor, he returns to the bedroom where he stares at the parallel lines on the white coverlet of Constance's bed, just below her head. By now, Rozsa's music is throbbing; the same passage will recur during the ski-run scene at Gabriel Valley. Both times, we may infer that a threatening memory is very close.

Suddenly, as the music continues, Ballyntine turns and goes out into the hallway, where he starts to descend the stairs. As he reaches the landing, halfway down, a close-up emphasises the razor still in his hand. For extra emphasis - of its long, narrow shape - the razor is shown against a rounded stair-knob.

Downstairs, Brulov is working at his desk. When Ballyntine appears, he makes another of his instant appraisals and realises his danger, but again doesn't let on. Instead, he feigns chumminess while insisting that his guest join him for a glass of milk and crackers. Surreptitiously, he drugs the milk. Then, in a striking subjective-shot, Ballyntine drains the glass of its white contents, and is soon asleep - dreaming.

So what's going on here? First, it seems to me that these stairs have only a very general 'Freudian' ambience. Even the stair-knob may be interpreted as either 'male' or 'female' (or both or neither), depending on which part of the human anatomy you care to liken it to. (Cf some of my comments on the dream-sequence, below.) And I think that only the most rabid Freudian interpreter would insist that a male person coming down a staircase represents, say, 'sadism' or anything else of a sexual nature (unless, of course, there are further contextual pointers to that effect). In an interview with some film students, Hitchcock was once asked about his tendency to include staircases in his films. Was it a case of symbolism? He replied that he thought it fell 'more into the area of the visual, really'.[39] Let's leave it at that, for now.

But the next point I want to make **is** fairly precise. The staircase episode and its outcome effectively reverse the content of the scene from **Torn Curtain** I described earlier, in which the younger man tricks the older of his knowledge. Here, it's the older man who tricks the younger. However, when Ballyntine afterwards tells Brulov his dream, it's because the older man has persuaded him of the real advantage he'll gain by doing so.

I see a further link with **Torn Curtain**. I once described how that film's young hero, Armstrong, is symbolically 'reborn' in a long threefold process of 'submission-containment-liberation' (see 'MacGuffin' 8). I think Ballyntine in **Spellbound** undergoes a similar process, and that his inward journey - a vital part of the film's design - begins with his forced **submission** to Brulov, after which he abandons his notion that 'Freud is hooey' and stops running away from himself.

Which may bring us to the scene's **specific** symbols: namely, the razor and the glass of milk. It's striking, even startling, that 'masculinity' is here subdued by 'femininity'. And yet, everything fits! The would-be still 'virile' psychiatrist and 'good' father-figure, Brulov, performs a symbolic (as well

as pragmatic) act that saves the day for all concerned, and without his losing face. For a parallel, think of Lisa Fremont at the end of **Rear Window**, where, once she sees that Jefferies is asleep, puts down 'Beyond the High Himalayas', with its 'masculine' title, and resumes reading her preferred 'Harper's Bazaar'. In her wisdom, she has learnt how to have her cake and eat it ...

As for Ballyntine, he has hardly yet even begun to find wisdom. In order to do that, he must abandon a certain 'Oedipal' fixation - involving a narrowly-conceived wish to be 'perfect' - and submit to his 'castration'.[40] Naturally, this involves some 'feminisation'. Yet it's precisely now that his inward journey begins, i.e. with his dream. In **Torn Curtain**, likewise, from the moment Armstrong pauses at the centre of the tiled mandala in the Berlin Museum, he starts to incorporate into his life hitherto-excluded experiences: e.g. of the arts, others' suffering, Nature (see 'MacGuffin' 8).

Mind you, Hitchcock well knows that the process we're now discussing must always remain incomplete and partial, and that there will be backsliding. The astute Brulov ('one of the biggest brains that is in psychiatry') almost certainly knows it, too. I find him admirable and yet, in a pessimistic sense, very human. He appears to have major faults, not least a vein of paranoia such as he might be called on to treat in some of his patients! He also knows how to grumble! While preparing the crackers and milk for the razor-clutching Ballyntine, he keeps up a spiel about how in old age 'everything becomes just the opposite' of what it was, and how nobody is ever satisfied. Though this sounds vaguely Schopenhauerian, especially the last part, as a piece of sentiment it's also **very** human. And let's notice the potential bearing of his remarks on aspects of gender-identity. Crucially, in his case, he's capable of both restraining his more 'masculine' aggressive impulses and drawing on his 'feminine' side.[41] Nevertheless, as I say, he's far from being 'perfect'.

Now, the film puts its audience at the centre of these matters, too, when it propels us with Ballyntine down the staircase, and we, like him, then literally swallow what Brulov offers, i.e. submit to what I've variously described as a symbolic 'anaesthesia' or 'castration'. Note that the screen is once again flooded with whiteness. It's a moment that makes good use of cinema's capacity to be non-specific. In a sense, its sheer power is the main idea. On waking, Ballyntine is the more ready to acknowledge Brulov as a sort of 'wise old man' figure - the fact that Brulov calls **him** 'wise guy' is a sales pitch, employing a form of reverse psychology! However, the film is careful to stress that what follows is only 'a shortcut'.

9. The dream

Ballyntine isn't the only person in the house who dreams on this particular night. Brulov, too, recounts a dream he has had - though it consists simply of his being served 'real coffee' by Constance! There's a running gag in the Rochester scenes involving Brulov's coffee-fetish, which is one of his lesser 'faults'. (Cf Hitchcock's 1944 **Bon Voyage**, whose Scottish airman is always hungry.) I must say that Andrew Britton seems to me to be absurdly hard on Brulov. For instance, he uses the matter of the coffee to support his view that Brulov 'takes over' Constance.[42] Whereas, I'd prefer to say that Brulov becomes increasingly - and admirably - detached about important things.

Now to Ballyntine's dream, which we both hear recounted by him to Brulov and see enacted on the screen. As the filmmakers planned it, it was to consist of four parts. Sadly, one of these was deleted by Selznick during final 'editing'.[43] What I'll do here, drawing on James Bigwood's research, is describe the missing part in its context within the dream as a whole. For the sake of clarity, I'll put square brackets round all quotes and descriptions concerning the deletions. The dream was to be made up as follows: '1. The Gambling Sequence, 2. Two men on a Roof, [3. The Ballroom Sequence,] 4. The Downhill-Uphill Sequence.' As Bigwood says, 'Three of these sequences are easily matchable to corresponding scenes in the finished film.'[44]

Here, for reference, is Ballyntine's narration for all four parts:

> 'It seemed to be a gambling-house but there weren't any walls, just a lot of curtains with eyes painted on them. A man was walking around with a large pair of scissors cutting all the drapes in half. And then a girl came in with hardly anything on and started walking around the gambling-room kissing everybody. She came to my table first. I was sitting there playing cards with a man who

> had a beard. I was dealing to him and I turned up the seven of clubs. He said, "that makes twenty-one, I win." But when he turned up his cards, they were blank. Just then the proprietor came in and accused him of cheating. The proprietor yelled, "This is my place and if I catch you cheating again, I'll fix you." ... He was leaning over the sloping roof of a high building. It was the man with the beard. I yelled at him to watch out. Then he went over - slowly - with his feet in the air. And then I saw the proprietor again - the man in the mask. He was hiding behind a tall chimney and he had a small wheel in his hand. I saw him drop the wheel on the roof. ... [I don't know how I got there, but I was in a ballroom. The dancers were all dressed in white suits and pretending to dance, but not moving. There was an orchestra dressed in white fur hats. And Dr Brulov was leading it. I was dancing with Constance, and she had a dance card and asked me to write my name on it. I refused, then grabbed her and we started dancing - rather wildly. We danced out of the ballroom, and I kissed her. The dance card kept getting bigger. It was full of names and addresses. And Constance turned into a statue.] ... Suddenly I was running. Then I heard something beating over my head. It was a great pair of wings. The wings chased me and almost caught up with me when I came to the bottom of the hill. I must have escaped. I don't remember. That's all there was. I woke up and saw Dr Brulov.'[45]

When Ballyntine finishes his account, Constance, who has been taking notes, comes and offers him coffee - almost as if to reward him and acknowledge that he has successfully performed a rite of passage (birth/rebirth?).

Of course, together they have still to do the really hard work of interpreting the dream. At first, just about all that Constance and Brulov come up with is how the beating wings at the end suggest a location, perhaps Angel Valley. Then Ballyntine helps them out - it was actually Gabriel Valley ...

Now, it was masterly of the filmmakers to spread the explanation of the dream over the entire last third of the picture. Even so, much goes unsaid. My exegesis can conveniently start with 'eye-symbolism'.

The sequence begins with a forward tracking movement. There's a dissolve from Ballyntine to a shot of several star-like points of light which, in turn, become a succession of realistic, though disembodied, eyes; only next do we arrive in the gambling-house with its **grotesque**, staring eyes painted on the drapes.[46] As the camera continues to track, we notice two more sources of 'eyes'. On the right, Ballyntine is playing cards with the bearded man; we observe the curious fact that the room's tables and chairs don't have the customary wooden legs but, instead, women's legs in high heels. And on each table are metronomes with swaying cutout eyes. Behind Ballyntine's table, on a pedestal, is what appears to be a lamp surmounted by a 'knob'. Further back again, revealed when the man with the scissors cuts the drapes at the end of the room, is another disembodied eye that seems to hover above the horizon.

Well, Freud tells us that every dream 'is the fulfilment of a wish'.[47] That's certainly the case here, inasmuch that the gambling-house - which could almost be a brothel - represents the world as a part of Ballyntine might wish it to be. Note that we arrive within its flimsy walls by means of a 'cosmic' journey, leaving the stars behind, no doubt both because they don't concern us (as the film began by emphasising) and because they're beyond human understanding and intervention anyway. Then we pass through an 'outer' world whose realistic eyes may remind us of the film's depiction of New York with its prying house-detectives, bell-boys and railway ticket-inspectors. Those realistic eyes do, in fact, look quite masculine. Only next do we enter the gambling-room. **Its** eyes are painted on labia-like drapes and look feminine. Moreover, as symbols, they fairly obviously represent the female sexual organ: hence the 'male' scissors cutting them à la the episode with the razor in Dali/Bunuel's **Un Chien Andalou** (1929).

Equally 'sexual' would have been some of the symbolism intended for the dream's ballroom episode: e.g. a sack of coal suspended from the ceiling.[48] But let's stay with 'eyes' for the moment. If you examine Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1900) and some of his subsequent writings, such as "The Uncanny" (1919), you find that he makes a distinction which film scholars (e.g. Margaret Horwitz, David Sterritt) haven't always sufficiently remembered.[49] Eyes, considered more or less objectively, are potential female symbols, as you might expect. Thus in 'The Interpretation of Dreams', having drawn the classic distinction between symbolic objects that are long and stiff - invariably male - and symbolic objects that are hollow - invariably female - Freud adds:

> The genitals can also be represented in dreams by other parts of the body: the male organ by a hand or a foot and the female genital orifice by the mouth or an ear or even an eye.[50]

Yet eyes considered more or less **subjectively** often figure in dream-symbolism as male, as when Freud tells us

> The blinding in the legend of Oedipus, as well as elsewhere, stands for castration.[51]

The latter meaning, 'castration', seems to be present in the **Spellbound** dream at one and the same time as the other meaning. That's to say, the man with the scissors is both performing symbolic sexual acts (on females) and venting his displeasure (on males). But then, why not? Our very language has a phrase that can be used in like manner. And the film itself, remember, gives the eyes painted on the drapes a specific 'identity' when Murchison says that they represent the guards at Green Manors. Moreover, we'll find that the business with the scissors has other possible meanings again ...

All the card-players in the gambling-room are men. Naturally, as they sit at its tables, their legs brush against the voluptuously 'female' table-legs. The swaying eyes on the metronomes - an old idea of Man Ray's -[52] suggest copulation, or masturbation. Now, none of these details conflicts with Freud, who in fact wrote of gambling in real life that it's a form of sexual compensation, or sublimation.[53] Later, another psychiatrist, Ralph Greenson, elaborated the same idea:

> The gambler masochistically enjoys his fear of losing and continues it as long as possible, because when he leaves the table or racecourse to take up his ordinary life some really intolerable fear awaits him; the smaller fear of losing his money is by comparison a pleasure. The mock struggle is a sublimation of the real struggle.[54]

Is this relevant to **Spellbound**? I think so, inasmuch that we've already begun to notice how Ballyntine's relations with Constance arouse in him ambivalent feelings of an ultimately 'Oedipal' kind. But the dream itself tells us that he's running away from something. Most specifically, the ballroom episode indicates that he dreads the marriage-bond, very much like Jefferies - with his 'Oedipal' hang-ups - in **Rear Window**. And again, more generally, I think we may even see the gambling-room episode as implying Hitchcock's 'Schopenhauerian' comment on the film's audience, whose motivation for entering the cinema is to escape boredom with its attendant anxieties and fears ...[55]

Next, a word about the lamp surmounted by what looks like a knob (or orb), that stands on a pedestal alongside Ballyntine's table. The knob has its 'prototypes' in some earlier scenes: e.g. on the gate-posts at Green Manors, and on the stair-posts at Brulov's house. My feeling about it rather matches what has been said above about eye-symbolism. Everything considered, I think its main emblematic function here is to represent a dominant 'masculinity' (or 'patriarchy') - though I wouldn't put it past either Dali or the filmmakers to attribute a secondary, 'female' meaning to it. (Cf my discussion, in 'MacGuffin' 12, of Hitchcock's fascination with things that may become their opposites.) Some reinforcement for the interpretation I've just given comes from an image employed in the final part of the dream, soon to be mentioned.[56]

A wish-fulfilment aspect continues with the entrance of the scantily-dressed girl who comes first to Ballyntine's table - though, note, she kisses the bearded man first of all. Symbolically, she's many things, including a waitress (at the Twenty-One Club) and a staff-member and/or patient (at Green Manors). Ballyntine will later say that she looked 'a little like Constance' even though she's played by Rhonda Fleming, whom we saw earlier as Miss Carmichael, and in fact doesn't **look** like her alter ego at all! As for the man who goes around cutting the drapes, he's played by the actor Norman Lloyd, who had earlier played Mr Garmes, Ballyntine's alter ego. The fact that Garmes had attacked Dr Fleurot and then tried to cut his own throat suggests further meanings of the dream's scissors: e.g. that they're an instrument of would-be 'escape' - yet after the scissors have cut through the eyes painted on the drapes, all that's revealed is another, solitary and stern-looking, eye peering in from outside ...

The card game, of course, harks back to the film's opening scene at Green Manors. But when the bearded man says to Ballyntine, 'that makes twenty-one, I win', he's effectively mentioning a further locale, the Twenty-One Club, where Edwardes and Murchison had quarrelled. (Ballyntine has just dealt a card whose suit is 'clubs'.) In 'The Interpretation of Dreams', Freud writes: 'A spoken remark in a dream is not infrequently ... an allusion to an occasion on which the remark in question was made.'[57]

But, once again, the matter isn't so simple. By being first to reach 'twenty-one' (in the card game of that name, also known as blackjack), the bearded man may seem to be asserting his 'maturity' and 'wisdom'. Yet, next minute, he seems, with his blank cards, to be saying just as forcefully that he's 'above' or 'apart' from all that. No wonder that the proprietor accuses him of cheating! Further, even in his appearance, with his impressive beard and dinner jacket, he's visibly more 'perfect' than his partner, Ballyntine, who is just clean-shaven and wears an ordinary suit.

Sorting all this out, we see that the bearded man represents the person whom Brulov earlier referred to - in Ballyntine's hearing - as the 'impossible' Dr Edwardes! Brulov had once quarrelled with him in Boston. And now here he is in the dream, not only making Ballyntine feel inferior but also drawing down on himself the wrath of the masked proprietor, i.e. Murchison. Clearly, the dream is ambivalent about him, presenting him as wise and authoritative, yet distant and infuriating. In effect, he represents Ballyntine's (and our) impression of all the more polarised aspects of the film's several psychiatrists, including even Brulov and Constance. At the same time, given that he's almost the ultimate in 'Oedipal' father-figures, setting himself up as 'God', it's very significant that the film aligns against him not just its nominal villain, Murchison, but also Brulov and Ballyntine. Brulov's epithet, 'impossible', carries great resonance. For instance, it suggests how **anyone** may feel 'castrated' when confronted with absolute 'perfection' or, for that matter, the Absolute itself. (At such times, mere anxiety may become 'cosmic anguish' - which we prefer to avoid at all costs. As Hitchcock once told Huw Wheldon of the BBC, 'reality is something none of us can stand, at any time'.)

As I say, the masked proprietor represents Murchison, whose particular quarrel with Edwardes had concerned his fear of being supplanted as head of Green Manors. (We have indeed seen Murchison wearing a mask, in the operating-theatre scene.) That matter comes to a head in the next part of the dream. Its locale is essentially Gabriel Valley, for the sloping roof refers to the ski-run there. Then again, the roof implies how this is the proprietor's house, i.e. Green Manors, while for Ballyntine the slope itself has both a particular and a general meaning, yet to be revealed. Helpfully, Dali has added roots - but not leaves - to the roof's tall chimney, indicating its metaphoric meaning of 'tree'. Near it, the proprietor drops the small wheel, i.e. a revolver. So much for his acceptance of a natural cycle of events. Incidentally, when the bearded man falls from the roof, with his feet in the air, we see that he's still wearing skis.

[A still photograph from the deleted 'ballroom' part of the dream accompanies James Bigwood's article. That still may well remind you of some of the tableaus of formally-dressed couples in **Last Year at Marienbad**. Most of the dream's static couples are dressed in white, but Ballyntine is again wearing the ordinary grey suit he wore in the gambling-room. High above the dance floor, the white-hatted Brulov conducts an orchestra whose members wear identical hats to his, of a pronounced 'Russian' kind. Perhaps there's a reference here to America's wartime ally, the Soviet Union, as well as to Brulov's Russian-sounding name.[58] The scene also has its own 'card' reference, here suggesting Ballyntine's fear of marriage and its commitments - but not of sex **per se**: note that he draws Constance aside and kisses her. Next thing, though, she turns into a statue, i.e. seems to revert to her former frigid state. Or should we interpret the statue as really mirroring his own condition? After all, another characteristic of dreams is their basic egocentricity, or narcissism ...]

Understandably, the last part of the dream shows Ballyntine running away. Pursuing him in the sky is a winged figure that's at once harpy and angel, perhaps representing the two opposing images that he has had of Constance all along.[59] Meanwhile, in the background stands a huge pair of pliers. These may seem as innocuous as, initially, the crop-dusting plane in **North by Northwest** had seemed - but don't be fooled. In fact, they're potentially castrating. (Selznick thought them 'phallic',[60] but he's someone else guilty of not remembering to distinguish between 'objective' and 'subjective', or, rather, between something seen and something experienced.) A glance at their outline shows them to be the complement of the gambling-room lamp with its 'knob'. They're designed to grip or crush such a shape ...

It's noteworthy that the storyboard describes this last part of the dream as the 'Downhill-Uphill Sequence'. Along with the film's staircase scenes and its Gabriel Valley sequence, it may remind us that **Spellbound** has almost as many ups and downs as **Downhill** (1927), **I Confess** (1952) and **Vertigo**.

10. Gabriel Valley

Like two critics interpreting a Hitchcock film, Constance and Brulov at first see in the dream only the particular meaning they're seeking. When their patient reacts to the sight of toboggan tracks in the snow outside Brulov's window, both of them rush to consult Constance's notes:

> Brulov: ... Hm. The sloping roof - that means only a mountain-side.
>
> Constance (eagerly): They were skiing. And the father-image, the bearded man, is Dr Edwardes. It's very simple. Edwardes plunged over a precipice while skiing.

The script steers clear at this stage of identifying the masked man - it wants to save its climax for later. Brulov does start to wonder aloud about who the man might be, but is brushed aside by Constance. She's sure that the next thing to do is to go to Gabriel Valley with Ballyntine.

In Hitchcock's **Aventure Malgache** (1944), a moment of ironic good fortune prompts a character to call on the Archangel Gabriel to take note. (The moment might be seen as requesting consideration for France's Marshal Pétain.) And in **Psycho**, shortly before Marion Crane is killed in a gleaming white bathroom, the camera lingers on a painting showing Gabriel bringing two female figures into Heaven.[61] Gabriel's name, in fact, means 'man of God'. The archangel was sometimes regarded as the angel of death but more frequently as one of God's chief messengers. In 'Paradise Lost' (iv, 55), Milton makes him 'Chief of the angelic guards' placed over Paradise.

So, whatever ambiguities Hitchcock intended with his various uses of the archangel's name or image, in **Spellbound** there seems a definite shift in emphasis from that given in the novel. There, the scene of the crime is called the 'Gorge du Diable'.[62]

Having trudged to the top, Constance and Ballyntine begin to ski down the valley's snowy slope. As they gather speed, she urges him to try and remember what happened when he last came here, with Edwardes. The couple's mutual descent has sexual connotations. It both recalls the ski-symbolism of **Mr and Mrs Smith** (1942)[63] and anticipates the shot in **The Birds** of the swaying pair of lovebirds in the car. (In an earlier scene, Brulov has called the couple just that, 'lovebirds'.) Of course, the love-element here isn't the same as the 'symphony orchestra and a flight of angels' that Constance had once joked about. But then, that's rather the point - whatever 'heavenly' purpose is perhaps being served anyway.

Further, the descent across a snow-field towards a precipice and the prospect it represents, of a sudden sharp drop or 'fall', is symbolic of birth - a birth that is feared as the loss of 'Paradise'. Milton's contemporary Henry Vaughan wrote a poem 'The Retreate' about 'childish innocence, and the child's recollections of pre-natal glory'.[64] Anyone who reads that poem must surely be reminded of Hitchcock's imagery in **Spellbound** and **Psycho**. It begins:

> Happy those early dayes! when I
> Shin'd in my Angell-infancy.
> Before I understood this place
> Appointed for my second race,
> Or taught my soul to fancy ought
> But a white, Celestiall thought ...

Also, it seems likely that William Wordsworth had Vaughan's lines in mind when he wrote the famous passage in his 'Intimations of Immortality' (1807), beginning 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting', i.e. a forgetting - or amnesia - concerning 'God who is our home'. And, of course, the notion of infancy as a 'Paradise' corresponds to Freud's description of the 'unashamed period of childhood', which he defines as lasting until the end of the third year of life.[65] Crucially, he adds that 'we can regain this Paradise every night in our dreams ... irrespectively perhaps of their actual content'.

And again, I've noted before how a snow-field, specifically, provides a common 'lost paradise' image, suggestive of both a frozen garden and of the (soft, moist) interior of the womb.[66]

Accordingly, the situation seems to be this. What Ballyntine is about to confront at Gabriel Valley is a buried memory from the 'Oedipal', i.e. post-innocent, part of his childhood, a memory which has been much reactivated by recent events. As we'll see, that memory is analogous to birth itself, causing yet more ambiguity. Will Ballyntine mistake the two things, and imagine that he has regained a freedom, a 'Paradise', that is actually lost for ever? Will he think himself cleansed of anxiety and guilt - rather like Marion Crane in her shower - when the underlying factors can perhaps never be expunged?

Before I suggest answers to these very Hitchcockian questions, let's not forget that Ballyntine has, almost inadvertently, begun a 'rebirth' of a more trusty kind, from the moment that he entered on the 'submission-containment-liberation' journey I outlined earlier. At present, he's literally out in the cold, having left the womb behind - only he hasn't yet secured himself another comparable 'home'. Likewise, in Constance's case, she has no more than **begun** to get in touch with her inner, more 'feminine' self. But at least on the train to Gabriel Valley she had resolved to henceforth wear the 'very feminine clothes' she has always secretly loved.[67]

As their descent of the ski-slope gathers speed, and the precipice looms, Ballyntine yells to Constance that he **has** remembered something: namely, the time in his childhood when he had caused his younger brother's death. The two boys had been playing near some spiked railings, and when the older boy, on an impulse, had suddenly **slid down the coping on a steep wall**, his feet had propelled the younger boy onto the spikes. As Ballyntine finishes describing this ghastly incident - which we see in flashback, and which, in the matter of its downward slide, is analogous to the act of being born - he flings himself in front of Constance and the two of them fall in a heap at the very edge of the precipice. Exultantly, Ballyntine yells, 'I didn't kill my brother! It was an accident!'

But was it? There, decidedly, is the rub. But before I turn to **that** issue, again it seems only fair to say that Ballyntine's saving of Constance's life here is undoubtedly an act of atonement (for his brother's death), as well as a proof of his love (for Constance).

Another observation, in passing, is this. Did the time that Ballyntine baled out of a burning aeroplane over Rome help prepare him for this moment? Certainly, in both a metaphoric and an actual sense, it was what led to his present ordeal (or ordeals). Not only did it launch him on the series of 'rebirthings' that we've been tracing,[68] but it caused him to be invalided out of the Army and to put himself in the care of Edwardes, a brother physician.

Obviously, that last point is important. Ballyntine's relation to Edwardes had been not only that of patient to doctor, or son to father, but that of brother to brother. Accordingly, I can think of several possible scenarios whereby Edwardes's death would have made Ballyntine feel guilty. What's basic, though, is how Ballyntine himself spontaneously links Edwardes's death to that of his brother, notwithstanding that he then calls the latter death 'an accident'. In fact, we've heard those words before in a Hitchcock film, in **Rebecca**, where they're probably just as wishful. (There, they're used by Maxim's second wife to refer to Rebecca's death, which was almost certainly a case of murder, albeit a provoked one.)[69] In Hitchcock's world, as in Schopenhauer's and Freud's, there **are** no accidents. The death of Ballyntine's brother seems a clear case of 'sibling rivalry' - something which, being related to the 'Oedipal' wish to possess one or other parent exclusively, can be very fierce.[70] Deep down, children are not little angels, but little monsters ...

It's time to return to the matter of Murchison, the film's nominal villain. I think we can now see how the film posits a continuum, with Murchison at one end and Brulov a distance away towards the other. But what of Ballyntine, and Constance? Well, who can truly say? I fancy that the poets who wrote of our separation from 'God' were really describing what Kant and Schopenhauer, roughly their contemporaries, identified more rigorously as our separation from the 'noumenal'. In any event, there's a sense in which we all have to make our own (subjective) reality. Hence the title I've chosen for this article, and which I'll discuss shortly. For now, the point is that such a 'reality' is never absolute or fixed, and is always situated somewhere on the continuum I've just mentioned. But that continuum itself is only a phenomenal thing - it tells us nothing of the noumenal realm. The fact that not once, in all of Ballyntine's 'rebirthings' and encounters with the colour white, does he succeed in recalling his actual birth or his 'pre-natal glory', strongly suggests a metaphor for how knowledge of the noumenal world eludes us.[71]

However, just because 'Paradise' lies on the far side of an invisible barrier, perhaps connected with the child's 'Oedipal' guilts, or matters of language-formation, let's not use Freud or, say, Lacan to deprive that notion of its referential and human content. Certainly Hitchcock didn't! Murchison, of course, is a predecessor of both Brandon in **Rope** (1948) and Gavin Elster in **Vertigo**, whose respective evil acts spring from nothing else but egregious Will. To that extent, there's something in them of all of us, something that partakes of, precisely, the noumenal.[72]

Ballyntine, though, submits to his 'castration' - in effect, acknowledges that he can never be 'God' - and thereby begins his journey towards finding a measure of happiness in this world.[73] The happy occasion he can immediately look forward to even has its own association with whiteness ... But before it arrives, there will be further ordeals. He must still undergo (or continue) the 'containment' stage of his inward journey. That becomes apparent when the police arrest him after they find Edwardes's body, with a bullet in its back, at the foot of the precipice. They throw him in gaol.

11. 'There is lots of happiness in working hard ...'

Time passes. With Ballyntine still in gaol, Constance returns to Green Manors, where Murchison is back in charge. Brulov drops her off, having given her what comfort he could in her distress. She has said that she'll 'fight and fight' to get Ballyntine free; but now that all the available evidence points to his guilt, the situation seems a forlorn one. Brulov again tries to console her. He says:

> It is very sad to love and lose somebody. But in a while you will forget. And you will take up the threads of your life where you left off not so long ago. And you will work hard. There is lots of happiness in working hard - maybe the most.

He kisses her goodbye, and promises to write.

Later, Murchison, too, advises Constance to 'try and forget things better forgotten'. This prompts Andrew Britton to observe that psychiatry is a 'normalising' science that lends its support to patriarchy.[74] I would have thought that matters at this stage of the film had clearly passed beyond psychiatry, and that Britton's comment were beside the point. At any rate, I must take issue with him on his attitude to Brulov generally. In effect, Britton is critical of the old man because he **isn't** truly 'wise', or a Nietzschean 'Superman'. Himself sounding like a '60s student radical, Britton tells us that 'American ideology is founded quite explicitly on the notion of work as the sublimation of sexual drives; in [Benjamin] Franklin's words, "Industry and constant employment are great preservatives of the morals of a nation" ...'.[75] I find this comment unhelpful, if only because it seems to slight Brulov's intelligence. We've certainly seen how the film shows him to be less than all-knowing (like the rest of us); but what exactly Britton could have expected even a Superman to advise Constance when Ballyntine was gaoled, other than what we hear Brulov actually say, eludes me.[76] In any case, his words, which are beautifully tentative, represent only the film's (feigned) 'fallback position' - they are **not**, I think, either Brulov's or the film's attempt to endorse a general work ethic.

A couple of analogies here should help. First, after both Brulov and Murchison have enjoined Constance to 'forget' Ballyntine, the position the film has reached corresponds to that in **Notorious** (1946) where Devlin's boss, Prescott, reclining on a sofa and munching crackers, tells Devlin to go and see what's wrong with Alicia, 'if you want to'. The audience now senses that a romantic climax **will** surely follow.

And, second, **Spellbound** is something other than a Bette Davis 'woman's picture'. Brulov and Murchison may both, momentarily, sound like a venerable family doctor advising the dowdy heroine to cut her losses, but the thrust of a Hitchcock movie is much more 'libidinous'. It's in such a context that the matter of 'good' and 'bad' father-figures contributes a mythic- or dream-dimension as much as a study of 'real' psychiatrists. As I say, I think Britton's comments on Brulov are beside the point.

12. Empathy

There's a striking passage in 'The Interpretation of Dreams' in which Freud notes of Shakespeare that his plays from 'Hamlet' onwards show a 'distaste for sexuality'.[77] In the case of Hitchcock's films, you

would be hard-pressed to find anything less than a continuing fascination with such matters, at least until you arrived at some arguably sour passages in **Frenzy** (1972). When Constance confronts Murchison near the end of **Spellbound**, in the very room she had once so impetuously entered, when it had been Ballyntine's, she brings with her all the beauty and courage and keenness of mind that have become hers to command since that earlier time when the doors swung open. On this occasion, Murchison, unmasked at last, produces a revolver but doesn't shoot his accuser - not least because he, as a man, isn't as cold-blooded as that ...

Let's backtrack. The showdown scene is most artfully designed. It echoes, as well as the episode I've just mentioned, the scene at Brulov's house where he had virtually 'talked' Ballyntine out of using the cut-throat razor against him, and into drinking the drugged milk. Constance will effect a similar turning of the tables, and she, too, will do it by 'talking'. Other visual links with that scene are the respective large desks (an important prop in the novel, too)[78] and the adjacent stairs. Moreover, both the weapons involved are 'masculine': a razor, a revolver. But where Brulov had overcome his antagonist by employing the 'feminine' glass of milk, Constance is armed with just her notes on Ballyntine's dream - and with her intellect and nerve, traditionally 'male' traits. Brulov had shown his coolness when, talking non-stop, he had needed to brush past Ballyntine on his way to fetch the milk from the kitchen. 'We will drink to youth', he had said. Now Constance hears herself complimented on her 'agile young mind' - and finds herself gazing into the muzzle of a gun. With ice-cold nerves, she slowly rises, while showing an impressive empathy as she tells Murchison why he isn't going to shoot her:

> You are thinking you were not mentally responsible for that other crime in the snow. They will find extenuating circumstances in the state of your health. They will not execute you for the death of Dr Edwardes. You can still live, read, write, research, even if you are put away. ... You are thinking that now, Dr Murchison. If you shoot now, it is cold, deliberate murder.

Constance begins to walk towards the door. The gun, in the foreground, follows her.

Of course, Constance's words here are as much a case of 'suggestion' as of 'empathy' - but, as I say, are impressive. They even make some sense (though Andrew Britton thinks them just 'a lie'):[79] for one thing, Murchison's victim, Edwardes, must really have been an infuriating crank! And it seems obvious that Murchison **had** been suffering from a breakdown when he shot him. A modern US court might therefore well find 'extenuating circumstances' in the case - I can't speak for the situation in 1945, exactly, but would note that Dr May Romm served as 'technical advisor' on the film.[80]

Some other points. Constance's ice-cold nerve is far from being the same as her 'frigidity' at the start. We might better speak of her new-found 'intuition', something she had lacked. The way she enters into Murchison's mind shows a capacity for 'bisexual' empathy that only her brilliant mentor, Brulov, has shown before (and will show again). Rather than diminishing her femininity, it enhances it! It draws on her continuing love for both Ballyntine and Brulov, if perhaps not Murchison.

Interestingly, she holds out to Murchison the prospect of 'work' as consolation, just as Brulov had earlier done to her. But again we see plainly enough that what would be missing in that case would be love, freely and mutually reciprocated.

Constance leaves the room - the last-but-one of the film's many threshold moments. The gun in Murchison's hand now slowly swivels round until it's pointing directly into the camera. When Murchison pulls the trigger, and the screen is filled with a red flash (in the original prints, anyway), the near-rhyme with the subjective-shot of milk being drunk completes the linkage with the scene at Brulov's house.[81] There's also at least one other shot the red flash rhymes with: describing the flashback when Ballyntine's brother is killed, the screenplay mentions how 'the screen is splashed with a dark fluid that blots the scene out'.[82] Such a rhyme suggests a final laying of ghosts, roughly the equivalent of the climax of **Marnie**, where another bloody scene from childhood is exhumed one last time ...

13. 'Liberation'

At Gabriel Valley, Ballyntine had told Constance that she was going to look wonderful wearing white and with orange-blossom in her hair. The anticipated moment finally arrives, after Ballyntine is released

from gaol. In effect, his marriage marks the consummation of his new relative 'freedom' (after 'submission' and 'containment'). It also can't help but signify what Raymond Bellour calls the classic Hollywood ending, 'the formation of the couple'.

But now let's look closer. As our couple prepare to depart for their honeymoon - at an undisclosed destination - Brulov sees them off at the railway station. Appropriately, it's the last of the film's threshold scenes, played out before the same uniformed ticket-inspector who had figured in an earlier scene - and who may recall the 'Oedipal' ticket-inspector from **Suspicion** (see 'MacGuffin' 7). More on him in a moment.

Brulov embraces Constance and shakes hands warmly with Ballyntine. The screenplay notes of the two men, 'Their attitudes toward each other are now very friendly - no trace of restraint.' It could almost be the ending of **Young and Innocent**. Now Brulov repeats a remark of his from the Rochester sequence. 'And remember what I say,' he tells Ballyntine, 'any husband of Constance is a husband of mine, so to speak.' In other words, he's not so much losing a 'daughter' as gaining a 'son'.

Equally, though, the remark has 'bisexual' implications. But now we may appreciate what's involved. As events have shown, Brulov is no one-dimensional man. I'll refrain from detailing at this late stage something that has been implicit all along (at least, since my reference to inward journeys and the mandala in **Torn Curtain**): Jung's notion of the path that leads to 'individuation'. It's enough for me to reiterate that Brulov may not be 'perfect' (or 'perfected'), or even aspire that way, but that he **has** begun to master one of life's great skills, detachment. And that, like Ballyntine and Constance, he hasn't exactly stood still since the day that pair first landed in his house claiming to be newly-weds. What was implicit in the business with the symbolic glass of milk now receives its verbalisation in Brulov's remark. Only, more than ever, because detachment involves a sacrifice as well as a gain, he's like the blind, i.e. 'castrated', Philip Martin in **Saboteur**, a male mother - or wife! More nearly than before, he **is** a 'wise old man', a 'Teiresias' figure. And like the filmmakers themselves, who have settled for making their particular 'art', he hasn't lost - he has gained.[83]

Less is more. Is that the theme of **Spellbound**? Certainly, art itself, with its enclosing frames, provides a model. So, too, do artists. They fashion a subjective reality that's at once theirs and their audience's - and may touch the numinous. Another example is provided by the figure of 'the dandy', whose characteristics Hitchcock and Dali both emulated at times -[84] someone who goes his own, often outrageous, way in matters of personal style, etc., yet who may end by embodying the inner life of his time and place (or, at the very least, of dandies everywhere). Now, in so far as it's a general principle we're talking of, it's displayed for our edification and amusement at the end of **Spellbound**. I'm thinking of how Ballyntine and Constance make their own gesture of subjective freedom. Most couples who kiss outside railway stations do so because one of their number is going on a journey, and the other one is staying. But not these two! Once before, in front of the same bemused ticket-inspector, they had done it their way. Now, in happy defiance, they do it again. And why not? Having kissed, they pass through the barrier gate together.

Brulov had once said that 'there's nothing so nice as a new marriage. No psychoses yet. No aggressions. No guilt complexes.' But the plain fact is that no-one who's born into this world of restless Will - Hitchcock's world, our world - stays free of anxiety and anguish, guilt and doubt, for long. Decidedly not married couples, in Brulov's view! Coming back to **Spellbound**, its ending reminds me, firstly, of just such a movie as Raymond Bellour implied when he spoke of Hollywood's 'formation of the couple': a Howard Hawks comedy like **Man's Favourite Sport?** (1964). And yet, that film's ending manages to convey far more than Bellour's phrase can, especially when we hear John McGiver deliver his valediction on the film's newly-weds, whose dinghy is drifting out to sea, 'They're beyond help now.' Secondly, I'm reminded again of what is certainly one of the best of all films about 'space-time' anguish, **Last Year at Marienbad**. It ends with its new couple 'getting lost, forever, in the calm night ...'.

It's a sure bet that the calmness won't last long.[85]

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Notes

1. See Andrew Britton, "Hitchcock's **Spellbound**: Text and Counter-Text", in 'CineAction!', No. 3/4, Winter 1986, pp. 72-83; and James Bigwood, "Solving a **Spellbound** Puzzle", in 'American Cinematographer', Vol. 72, No. 6, June 1991, pp. 34-40. My thanks to Carol Abbott and Aysen Mustafa of the Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, for providing a copy of each of these articles.

2. Throughout this article, I've standardised the spelling of the Peck character's name as 'Ballyntine', which is how it's spelt in the published screenplay of the film included in Gassner & Nichols (eds), 'Best Film Plays - 1945', pp. 57-113.

3. Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (1974), pp. 193-94.

4. Britton, p. 78.

5. 'Francis Beeding' (pseudonym), 'The House of Dr Edwardes' (1927), Chapter One.

6. A scene cut from the end of the film would have shown Tisdall finally coming to the Burgoyne house for a meal, thus 'substituting' him for the dead Mrs Burgoyne. Note that the film gives Tisdall no family of his own (cf Ballyntine in **Spellbound**). There's a similar 'incestuousness' about the endings of some early Dickens novels.

7. Cf Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (1991), pp. 45-46. Paglia notes, **inter alia**, that such a figure can also be found in the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth and Keats, and that T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' follows Apollinaire (who invented the term 'surrealism') in making Teiresias 'the witness and repository of modern sexual miseries'.

Actually, Philip Martin (Vaughan Glazer) is a figure modelled after the blind hermit in James Whale's **Frankenstein** (1931), which in turn built **its** character out of some details in Mary Shelley's original tale (1818). In 'MacGuffin' 4, I remarked on how Philip Martin calls policemen 'unimaginative', implying that he himself is something of a surrogate for the filmmakers. Likewise, I feel that when **Psycho** (1960) invokes Milton's sonnet known as 'On His Blindness', there's a contrast being drawn between the filmmakers' broadness of (inward) vision and the characters' narrow viewpoints (see 'MacGuffin' 4). I mention this because I further feel that Brulov in **Spellbound**, although he's not blind, shares with Philip Martin a certain surrogacy with the filmmakers, especially at the end.

It may also be pertinent to mention here what I noted in 'MacGuffin' 12, that Hitchcock, who was celibate for much of his life, once remarked that it was only his marriage to Alma that had stopped him 'going gay' ...

8. This is something I noted when I once read the unpublished studio screenplay (Paramount Pictures, 1955) by John Michael Hayes. My thanks to filmmaker Richard Franklin who loaned me his copy.

9. Also, in 'MacGuffin' 13, p. 12, I note the pertinence of Hitchcock's 'moving-around principle': his notion that a film's story should echo the very movement that goes into the making and projecting of movies.

10. See my remarks on Pascal Bonitzer's essay, "Hitchcockian Suspense", in 'MacGuffin' 10, pp. 11-12 (part of a review of 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan ...', edited by Slavoj Zizek).

11. For some similarities of Schopenhauer's concept of 'the Will' to Freud's concepts of 'the Unconscious' and 'libido', see Patrick Gardiner, 'Schopenhauer' (1967), pp. 176-77, and Bryan Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), pp. 216-17 and 283-85. The Francis Beeding novel, op. cit., Chapter Six, itself uses strikingly 'Schopenhauerian' images to describe the Unconscious, calling it 'blindly dynamic, ... insentient and with no knowledge of good and evil, the primitive will of the human creature to persist, to develop, to fulfil an unknown purpose, a darkness that stirred with primeval memories'. As for Carl Jung's use of the term 'libido', he meant by it simply 'psychic energy' in general. See Frieda Fordham, 'An Introduction to Jung's Psychology' (1966), p. 17.

12. Arthur Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. II. Somewhat more elaborately, Salvador Dali wrote that 'Eroticism is the monarchical principle that cybernetically flows in the molecular structures of DNA' (quoted in Jacques Dopagne, 'Dali', 1974, Introduction).

13. Schopenhauer, Vol. I.

14. Magee, p. 220.

15. For a discussion of the primal scene in **Rear Window**, see Barbara Odabashian, "The Unspeakable Crime in Hitchcock's **Rear Window**", in the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 3-11. Odabashian calls the primal scene 'a perfect crime for the medium of film' (p.3). See also note 70 below. Note that Hitchcock himself once told a team of interviewers from 'Movie' (UK) that **Rear Window** is based on 'frustration'.

16. Schopenhauer, Vol. I.

17. Leonard J. Leff, 'Hitchcock and Selznick' (1988), p. 126.

18. Dopagne, Introduction.

19. Magee, p. 129.

20. Bigwood, p. 40.

21. As Hitchcock was aware, there's also a Chirico quality about the **Spellbound** dream. See 'MacGuffin' 9, p. 10. For the record, several of the details from the dream (e.g. lines drawn to infinity, tables with women's legs) recur in Dali's 1957 'The Woman with a Face of Rose'.

22. Beeding, Chapter One.

23. Britton, p. 79, refers to 'the constancy of woman' and invokes Chaucer's Constance in 'The Man of Law's Tale'.

On the film's theme of 'love', it's worth recalling that Hitchcock once remarked about audiences that it's the woman who usually makes the decision about what film to attend with her partner - and that he, Hitchcock, designed his films accordingly. When the homosexual narrator of Edmund White's 'A Boy's Own Story' (1983), which is set in the early 1950s, telephones his businessman father and mentions falling in 'love', the word startles his father. 'Instantly I recognised that in such a big, hardworking country [the USA] and in the vocabulary of such a sober man the word **love** took on a coy, neurasthenic ring. Women lived for love ...' (Chapter Six).

24. This is something I discussed in my review of Robert Kapsis's 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 96-116. I found that even Brian De Palma is comparatively erratic in this matter. So, too, I might now add, is Kenneth Branagh, whose **Dead Again** I mention in the present article.

25. In the novel, Murchison on several occasions makes a sudden, unwelcome appearance in a doorway, or enters someone else's room in their absence.

26. Apparently, the matter of Murchison's more-than-platonic interest in Constance was stronger in one of the film's early drafts, and had the backing of the film's technical advisor, Dr May Romm. See Leff, p. 137. On Hitchcock's tendency to store up for future use 'unrealised' aspects of novels, etc., that he had adapted, I've commented before (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 14, p. 13). I think it very probable that the 'seduction' scene in **Marnie** was consciously 'borrowed' by Hitchcock from the **Spellbound** novel.

27. **Rear Window** even has a line, spoken by Lisa Fremont, 'There's something terribly wrong'.

28. 'Seamless transitions' of a slightly different kind - involving the camera's appearing to follow a character through a closed door - occur in **Stage Fright** (1950) and **The Wrong Man** (1957).

29. Robert B. Downs, 'Moulders of the Modern Mind' (1961), p. 333, lists among 'numerous writers who have drawn freely from' Frazer's work, the following: Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot ...

30. Sir James George Frazer/ Sabine MacCormack, 'The Illustrated Golden Bough' (1978), p. 22. The passage begins thus: 'Down to the decline of Rome a custom was observed at Nemi which seems to transport us at once from civilisation to savagery.'

31. H. Ringgren, "King", in 'Man, Myth and Magic' (1970ff), p. 1566.

32. Chapter Seven, and Chapters Four and Ten.

33. As I recall, he was talking about **The Birds** (1963).

34. I forget which (Marx Brothers) film the phrase comes from. In any event, Selznick had picked it up for his own use, and that's no doubt the source for Hitchcock and Hecht's inclusion of it in their script. See Leff, p. 161.

35. Ibid.

36. Mary Ann Doane, 'The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s' (1987), offers some rather perfunctory remarks about Hollywood's depiction of 'the transference'. She writes, for instance, that films of the period use 'psychoanalysis to validate socially constructed modes of sexual difference which are already in place - although potentially threatened by a wartime reorganisation' (p. 46). This generalisation shows a lack of appreciation for the 'physician, heal thyself' theme that runs subversively through both **Spellbound** and the Francis Beeding novel. By the same token, I don't deny that the surface optimism of Hitchcock's film is better suited to the very early days of Freud's (and Breuer's) investigations, as depicted in John Huston's **Freud** (1962), than to the sophisticated and, in some ways, disappointing situation that psychoanalysis had reached at the end of World War II.

37. Laplanche & Pontalis, 'The Language of Psychoanalysis' (1988), p. 458. See also p. 28.

38. Fleetingly, but significantly, Brulov's first reaction on being told that Constance and Ballyntine are married is to flash a look of anger at the younger man - who has 'usurped' his place in Constance's affections.

39. Hitchcock's remark was made at one of the classes run by the late Arthur Knight at the University of Southern California. A tape of the question-and-answer session was given to me by Richard Franklin.

40. The theme of the necessity to accept a symbolic castration runs through some of Raymond Bellour's 'Lacanian' analyses of Hitchcock's films, notably his 115-page article on **North by Northwest** in 'Communications', No. 23, 1975 (in French). Cf note 73 below, on the homosexual novelist Yukio Mishima, whose heroes find any form of 'castration' ignominious and inglorious.

41. When Brulov had attended a talk given by Dr Edwardes at a psychiatry convention in Boston, he had become so exasperated that, finally, he had got up and kicked over some chairs 'which nobody was sitting in', before walking out. The qualification about the chairs is important. Someone else in a Hitchcock film who learns to control his 'masculine' aggression is Mitch in **The Birds** - when Melanie restrains him from throwing a stone at some crows. The name of the game is 'survival'.

On the matter of things becoming their opposites, I'm strongly reminded of some observations of Jung. In his 'Collected Works', Vol. 7, he quotes Heraclitus on how 'sooner or later everything runs [i.e. turns] into its opposite'. Frieda Fordham notes that psychic opposites (e.g. consciousness and unconsciousness) 'have a regulating function ..., and when one extreme is reached libido passes over into its opposite. ... To Jung the regulatory function of the opposites is inherent in human nature and essential to an understanding of psychic functioning.' (Fordham, p. 18) Below, in the text, I discuss some possible implications of this for surrealism, and for Hitchcock's film.

42. Britton, p. 77.

43. Leff, p. 165.

44. Bigwood, p. 38.

45. Gassner & Nichols, pp. 99-101; Bigwood, p. 38.

46. There's a page of frame-stills from the **Spellbound** dream in Ronald Haver, 'David O. Selznick's Hollywood' (1980), p. 349 - twelve selected frames, twice as many as Truffaut's book gives the same sequence. Unfortunately, three of the frames have been jumbled.

47. 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1900/1954), Chapter III - the phrase forms part of the chapter-title.

48. Leff, p. 157.

49. Margaret M. Horwitz, "**The Birds**: A Mother's Love", in 'Wide Angle', Vol. 5, No. 1, 1982, pp. 42-48, cites a passage in which Stephen Heath quotes Freud on the 'substitutive relation between the eye and the male organ ... in dreams and myths and phantasies', i.e. on the castration aspect of eye-symbolism. To be fair to Horwitz, she manages, by some tortuous logic, to suggest that eyes may be symbolically 'castrated' in the case of women also. (See her n. 10 on p. 48.) But she seems unaware of Freud's saying straight out that eyes can stand for the female sexual organ - which seems an obvious matter anyway. David Sterritt, "The Diabolic Imagination: Hitchcock, Bakhtin, and the Carnivalisation of Cinema", in the 1992 'Hitchcock Annual', p. 65, merely quotes Horwitz (quoting Heath quoting Freud!), i.e. he, too, seems unmindful of Freud's other emphasis. As for Heath, writing on "Difference", in 'Screen', No. 19, Autumn 1978, p. 87, he indeed notes that castration is only one 'emphasis' (his word) of eye-symbolism in Freud.

50. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 359.

51. Ibid, p. 398n. A similar point is made in "The Uncanny".

52. Bigwood, p. 39.

53. Alan Wykes, 'The Complete Illustrated Guide to Gambling' (1964), p. 16.

54. Quoted in Wykes, pp. 17-18.

55. In the 1940s, Hitchcock was quoted as saying: 'I aim to give the public good healthy mental shake-ups. Civilisation has become so screening and sheltering that we cannot experience sufficient thrills at first hand.' See Peter Noble, ed., 'BFI Index to the Work of Alfred Hitchcock' (1949).

56. On the symbolism of round objects in Hitchcock, cf the bar-bell carried by Major Lacey (Nigel Bruce), posing as a strongman, in the fancy-dress ball scene of **Rebecca**. As I've mentioned in a previous 'MacGuffin', the bar-bell's two round 'weights' prove to be hollow, without substance ...

57. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 304.

58. Actor Michael Chekhov, who was born in Petrograd, a nephew of the great Russian writer, 'had the schmaltz to portray Constance's surrogate father and the strength to represent her mentor' (Leff, p. 137).

59. Sydney arts lecturer, Catriona Moore, has written that though 'the Surrealists tackled the stifling stereotypes of Mary and Magdalene, angel and courtesan, that still plague Christian civilisation, ... in the process they invented some equally restrictive images of their own. Woman was man's mediator with nature and the unconscious; she was a child-woman or femme fatale, and the muse, source and inspiration of male desire.' (Review of Robert Short's 'Dada and Surrealism', in 'The Weekend Australian', 15-16 October, 1994.) On the whole, I think **Spellbound** shows an intelligent recognition that these things **are** just stereotypes. Cf note 36 above.

60. Cf Leff, p. 157: 'Hitchcock fought to retain some of the Dali imagery; the audience would follow the

action, not the objects, he told Selznick.' Leff seems in error when he adds that, 'fearing the wrath of the psychiatric community, Selznick yanked the gigantic phallic pliars'. Or was there another pair?

61. I take it to be Gabriel because, according to a recent radio programme, Gabriel was the only angel that could fly. Cf 'MacGuffin' 14, p. 11. (The same programme, broadcast on Australia's Radio National, quoted a staggering statistic from a recent issue of 'Time': today, two-thirds of all Americans believe in angels as real, corporeal beings.)

62. Beeding, Prologue.

63. When in use, and not entangled as in **Mr and Mrs Smith**, skis may contribute to the exhilarating feeling of **flying**, which Freud identified with 'general sexual excitement'. (Cf Britton, p. 79.) Perhaps this observation may also be relevant to the role played by staircases in **Spellbound**.

64. Entry on Henry Vaughan (1621-95), in Margaret Drabble, ed., 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature' (1985), p. 1023.

65. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 245.

66. See my article on **The Paradine Case** (1947) in 'MacGuffin' 12. The **coldness** of a snow-field, considered as a symbol, is what suggests the feeling of loss ...

67. The film does not, I think, equate a woman's femininity with her 'real self' - only with a vital dimension of that self. Once Constance falls in love, and no longer hides behind glasses and a dowdy doctor's-jacket, she emits vitality in **whatever** she wears. Wearing a neat, but not severe, suit, Ingrid Bergman may remind you of nothing so much as those radiant young women in blazers you see every four years on TV participating in the Olympic Games.

68. Another 'rebirthing', of course, occurs with Ballyntine's **falling** in love. It may be instructive, in this particular matter of imagery, to note a parallel in Charles Dickens's 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864), whose hero, John Harmon, must undergo a rebirth as 'John Rokesmith' and thereafter go around incognito for a time. (Does this plot sound familiar?) The crucial passage comes in Book the Second, Chapter 13, where Harmon is set upon by thugs and left for dead in a room above the Thames. For a while, Harmon just lies there, completely without a sense of self. '"There was no such thing as I, within my knowledge."' His narration continues:

> 'It was only after a downward slide through something like a tube, and then a great noise and a sparkling and a crackling as of fires, that the consciousness came upon me, "This is John Harmon drowning! John Harmon, struggle for your life. John Harmon, call on Heaven and save yourself!" I think I cried it out aloud in a great agony, and then a heavy horrid unintelligible something vanished, and it was I who was struggling there alone in the water.'

'Our Mutual Friend', one of four Dickens novels that Hitchcock studied at school, offers several intriguing parallels to matters in Hitchcock's films, including **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** ...

69. See 'MacGuffin' 6.

70. There's an excellent brief survey of matters pertaining to the Oedipus complex, including sibling rivalry, in Charles Brenner, 'An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis' (1957), pp. 118-23. David Stafford-Clark, 'What Freud Really Said' (1967), p. 97, no more than mentions sibling rivalry; but he then adds some helpful remarks about the effect on the young child of witnessing - or hearing about - the primal scene. (Stafford-Clark, whom I quote at the head of this article, was 'technical advisor' on Huston's **Freud**.)

71. And yet, in those lines conspicuously alluded to in **Marnie**, when Mark mis-quotes Emerson, 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man.'

72. Schopenhauer believed that Kant was wrong in thinking that we are absolutely cut off from Will (= the noumenal). On the contrary, thought Schopenhauer, Will flows through us, in our bodies. We can **feel** it.

That's one reason why Thornhill's 'I never felt more alive' in **North by Northwest** is significant. (I explore this idea, in relation to **Torn Curtain**, in 'MacGuffin' 8.) A trait of Hitchcock's villains, though, is that, in a way, they're **too** wilful, too concerned to **be** God - like Brandon in **Rope**. They end up cutting themselves off from the very thing they seek. That's why I can suggest in the text that the message of **Spellbound** is 'less is more'. (In Schopenhauer's view, which is certainly more Buddhist than Christian - notwithstanding Christ's 'eye of the needle' parable - if we could be nothing at all, we would be at one with the numinous. Consciously or not, Hitchcock in his films often seems to delight in teasing us with this existential paradox.)

Notes 73-85 will appear in 'MacGuffin' 16.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The many and various sources of **Foreign Correspondent**; book reviews (e.g. 'In the Name of National Security'); the search for **The Mountain Eagle/Fear o' God/Der Bergadler**; Adrian Martin on **Lifepod**, et al.

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ODD SPOT: REPETITION STRAIN

In Hitchcock's thriller called **Spellbound** (1945), Gregory Peck plays an amnesiac who, it turns out, in childhood had accidentally killed his brother. He incurs many guilts and unsettling memories, one of which is triggered off when, on a train from New York, he observes the passing rail lines and remembers a moment of wartime violence near Rome. In a dream, he plays a losing hand of cards in a gambling-casino run by a crafty 'proprietor'.

In Robert Siodmak's **The Great Sinner** (1949), Peck plays a compulsive gambler who loses his money in a casino run by a wily 'proprietor'. In Nunnally Johnson's **The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit** (1956), Peck plays a New York executive who, gazing from his train window at the passing rails, guiltily remembers a moment of wartime violence near Rome in which he accidentally killed his buddy. And in Edward Dmytryk's thriller called **Mirage** (1965), Peck plays an amnesiac who is chased by criminals around New York.

What does this say about film producers' tendency to 'type-cast'?

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'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. For continuing support, we thank the Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales. This issue printed by TS Press, Collingwood, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 16 August 1995 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5 £3

EDITORIAL

First, a huge apology. Squeezed out of this issue is the 'Letters' section. It will return with a vengeance next time. Among those who sent enthusiastic letters about our **Spellbound** issue were Ronald Conway, Leslie Shepard, John Kuhns, Tim Costello, 'Huntley Haverstock' (!), and Philip Kemp. I thank all these people, and will run some of your letters in the next issue.

For now, I'll just say that I was particularly gratified to get Ron Conway's letter - not just because Ron is a respected 'MacGuffin' contributor of old, but also because he's a professional psychologist. Which brings me to my next point about the **Spellbound** issue. Somehow, in researching the article on Hitchcock's film, I neglected to look at a significant essay which Royal S. Brown wrote for the 'Film/ Psychology Review', Winter-Spring 1980. (Brown's book, 'Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music', has just been published.) The essay is called "Hitchcock's **Spellbound**: Jung Versus Freud", and it anticipates some of the points made in 'MacGuffin' 15. For example, it notes how Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll) 'corresonds strongly' to the mythical figure 'of the "sick king"' (p. 38). On the other hand, I have to say that I found the essay generally unsatisfying and rather muddle-headed.

The 'MacGuffin' article raised the matter of the psychological 'bisexuality' of Hitchcock's films - and their director's fascination with things becoming their 'opposites'. Well, I see that Donald Spoto's 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983) quotes an unnamed actress on how Hitchcock always told his actors that they really had to be part masculine and part feminine in order to get inside any other character (p. 86). And, watching Hitchcock's **Sabotage** (1936) the other day, I was struck by the scene in the aquarium where a young man tells his girlfriend about the female turtle: 'After laying a million eggs, she changes her sex.'

Sorry, but a page of footnotes from the **Spellbound** article is again held over. On a lighter matter, I was wrong last time to say that the phrase 'mogo on the gogo', heard in **Spellbound**, came from a Marx Brothers film. In fact, it came from the W. C. Fields film **The Bank Dick** (1940). There'll be a bumper 'Bloopers' section in the next 'MacGuffin' ...

The main article this time is on the many 'sources' of Hitchcock's fine wartime comedy-thriller **Foreign Correspondent** (1940). I offer it to Australian readers, at least, as a contribution to the recent debate on alleged 'plagiarism' by an author named Helen Darville. For, when Hitchcock 'plagiarised', **he** did it in spades - and in style!

Last item, but one, and certainly not least. There are a couple of excellent 'guest articles' this time. Adrian Martin writes on some recent Hitchcock-derivative videos. And Jenny Hammerton, an MA - Film Archiving graduate from Manchester, provides some tantalising information about what may have happened to Hitchcock's 'lost' film, **The Mountain Eagle** (1926). Thanks, too, to the four experts whose 'best films of 1994' are listed inside.

Finally, some gloom. A recent huge increase in bank charges on 'foreign' cheques may necessitate an almost equally hefty rise in 'MacGuffin' overseas-subscription rates. See next issue. Meanwhile, a 'MacGuffin' subscription within Australia becomes $16 for four issues - effective immediately - to cover increased production costs.

To everyone, good viewing!

Best Films of 1994

This year, we've lists from four top Aussie film critics. The most-mentioned film (three times) is Robert Altman's sardonic LA comedy **Short Cuts**.

Two of the lists are uncomplicated, inasmuch as they stick to the year's new features released in cinemas. Let's start with those. Tom Ryan teaches film at Swinburne University, Melbourne, and reviews movies for 'The Sunday Age'. Evan Williams is based in Sydney, where he's a film reviewer for 'The Weekend Australian' and writes on film for 'Quadrant'.

Tom's list

Trois Couleurs: Rouge (Kieslowski, France)
Trois Couleurs: Bleu (Kieslowski, France)
Schindler's List (Spielberg, USA)
Un Couer En Hiver (Sautet, France)
Natural Born Killers (Stone, USA)
Geronimo (Hill, USA)
Four Weddings and a Funeral (Newell, UK)
No Worries (Elfick, Australia)
Once Were Warriors (Tamahori, New Zealand)
Pulp Fiction (Tarantino, USA)

Evan's list

Trois Couleurs: Rouge
Schindler's List
Short Cuts (Altman)
Once Were Warriors
Fearless (Weir)
China Moon (Bailey)
Trois Couleurs: Bleu
To Live (Yimou)
Bad Boy Bubby (De Heer)
Trois Couleurs: Blanc

Next, Tina Kaufman is another Sydneysider, and former editor of 'Filmnews'. Tina will be writing a regular column for 'The MacGuffin', starting next issue. She makes it her business to see - and be knowledgeable about - all kinds of movies, both new and old, both mainstream and outhouse.

Tina's list: Short Cuts (Altman); Carlito's Way (De Palma); The Last Seduction (John Dahl); Flesh and Bone (Steve Kloves); The Ashes of Time, Chungking Express (Wong Kar Wei); Le Samourai (Melville); Dishonoured (Sternberg); Paris Nous Appartient (Rivette); My Night With Maud (Rohmer); London (Patrick Keiller); Only the Brave (Anna Kokkinos); The Puppetmaster (Hou Hsiao-hsien); There Was a Father, Late Spring, Early Spring (Ozu).

Lastly, Adrian Martin wrote the book 'Phantasms' (reviewed in 'MacGuffin' 13) and reviews films for the Melbourne 'Age'. His article on **Lifepod**, et al., appears elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin'. Like Tina Kaufman, Adrian sees most everything that's going!

Adrian's List: 1. Masterpiece: Les Baisers de Secours/Emergency Kisses (Philippe Garrel, 1989); 2. Revelations: L'Ange (Patrick Bokanowski, 1983), The Loveless (Kathryn Bigelow/Monty Montgomery, 1983), Mexico/Mexico crossed-out (Mike Hoolboom/Steve Sanguedolce, 1993), Where is My Friend's Home? (Abbas Kiarostami, 1987), Husbands (John Cassavetes, 1970), Arizona Dream (Emir Kusturica, 1993), Another Girl, Another Planet (Michael Almereyda, 1992), I Hired a Contract Killer (Aki Kaurismaki, 1990); 3. 1994 Releases: A Perfect World (Clint Eastwood), Carlito's Way (Brian De Palma), Fearless (Peter Weir), Short Cuts (Robert Altman), Pulp Fiction (Quentin Tarantino), The Joy Luck Club (Wayne Wang), Body Snatchers (Abel Ferrara); 4. Classics: Force of Evil (Abraham Polonsky, 1948), A Canterbury Tale (Michael Powell, 1944), Anatomy of a Murder (Otto Preminger, 1959).

'The subtitled highlight of 1994', writes Tom Ryan, 'was without doubt Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski's superb **Three Colours** trilogy, shot in French. It is made up of three separately-made films which, taken as one, amount to a majestic masterpiece of contrasting moods and visual styles that merge into one as their characters come together in ways that could never have been anticipated.'

Readers' comments, anyone?

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Coming attractions: "Engendering the Truth About **Vertigo**"; reviews of **The Manxman** and **The Trouble With Harry**; "Hay-on-Wye and the Major Armstrong Case"; book reviews; Table of Contents for issues 13-16.

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Missing, Believed Lost: Hitchcock's 'The Mountain Eagle'[1]

THE MOUNTAIN EAGLE. (U.S. title **Pear O'God**). Gainsborough-Emelka. British, 1926.

Produced by Michael Balcon. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Screenplay by Eliot Stannard. Photographed by Baron Ventigmilia. Length 7,503 ft. Released May 23rd, 1927. Distributors W. and F. Made at Emelka Studios, Munich, and in the Austrian Tyrol.

Cast:

Pettigrew	Bernard Goetzke
Beatrice	Nita Naldi
Fearogod	Malcolm Keen
Edward	John Hamilton

Story: Beatrice, a school teacher in a small mountain village (set in Kentucky, presumably), incurs the enmity of Pettigrew, local J.P. and owner of the village stores, because he believes that she encourages the attentions of his son Edward, a cripple, who takes evening classes. At first antagonistic towards her, Pettigrew later becomes enamoured of her. When she rebuffs him he is furious and proclaims her a wanton. The angered villagers drive her into the hills, but she is saved from their fury by Fearogod, a mysterious stranger who lives a solitary life in a mountain cabin to which he takes her.

To stop any scandal Fearogod takes Beatrice to Pettigrew and makes him marry them, telling her he will give her a divorce whenever she wants it. She is, however, content. Pettigrew is vastly angry with the turn of events, and begins a feud. When his crippled son suddenly disappears from the village he has Fearogod arrested for his murder and in spite of no body being found Fearogod, the hermit, is tried, found guilty, and imprisoned. After a year in gaol he escapes and seeks shelter in the mountains with his wife and baby. When the child becomes ill Fearogod goes to the village for a doctor. He meets Pettigrew and a fight occurs - but the sudden return of Pettigrew's son puts everything in order and all ends happily. The mountain feud is over.

- Peter Noble, 'An index to the creative work of Alfred Hitchcock' (1949)

Introduction

How does one begin to write about a film which to all intents and purposes no longer exists? **The Mountain Eagle** was the second film to be directed by Alfred Hitchcock, and there is no confirmed copy of it still in existence. Nor is there much written material about the film because it seems likely that no-one has actually seen it for more than sixty years. These facts must greatly irk many Hitchcock aficionados, yet until recently you seldom heard that the film is unavailable because it is 'lost'...

Wanting to find out as much as possible about the 'lost Hitchcock', I used research methods that soon felt like a private detective's. I searched trade papers of the day for 'clues'. Leads as to why this particular film should have failed to survive when Hitchcock's first film, **The Pleasure Garden** (1925), still exists, slowly began to surface. I also heard whispers about someone in Europe who may perhaps have a print, and rumours about someone else who may hold 'extracts' on tape. Tantalising and fleetingly promising moments in the search for a missing film! However, like most good detective stories, this one should begin at the beginning.

'The Mountain Eagle'

There was a great deal of 'good press' for Hitchcock in the mid-to-late 1920s. The director had gained a reputation for artistic skill even before any of his films was tested at the box office. In particular, early praise was heaped on him in the article "Alfred the Great" by Cedric Belfrage in 'Picturegoer', March 1926. The article is full-page and includes a photograph of the man himself. Hitchcock is lauded as 'The world's youngest director' and much is made of his 'complete grasp of all the different branches of film technique' despite his tender years. Belfrage paints a picture of the young Hitchcock as a 'screen personality' who has worked his way up from 'the bottom rung' and who 'achieves his aim purely by

his own industry and expertise'. Robert E. Kapsis ('Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation', 1992) claims that this piece was written by Belfrage as a response to distributor [C.M.] Woolf's decision to shelve **The Pleasure Garden** because, although the film had been well received by the British trade press, Woolf thought it too arty for British audiences.

Like that film, **The Mountain Eagle** was made at the Emelka studios in Munich and also on location in the Tyrol. Michael Balcon, founder-head of the Gainsborough Company, had set up a number of co-production deals in Germany. Emelka, founded by the celebrated Ostermayr brothers, would provide production personnel, and W & F Film Service would handle distribution in the English-speaking market.

The film was designed to appeal to an American audience. Its story is said to be set in Kentucky [though the 'Bioscope' review of October 7, 1926, remarks that 'the village is obviously continental'!], and the female lead was a Hollywood star, Nita Naldi. It seems that Hitchcock was not particularly impressed by the casting of Ms Naldi. To Francois Truffaut, he said:

> The producers were always trying to break into the American market, so they wanted another film star. And so, for the part of the village schoolmistress, they sent me Nita Naldi, the successor to Theda Bara. She had fingernails out to there. Ridiculous!

A reviewer in 'Kinematograph Weekly' wrote that 'Nita Naldi is quite good, but not very sympathetic as Beatrice'. Other actors in the film, Bernhard Götzke [who had played Death in Fritz Lang's 1921 **Der Müde Tod**] and Malcolm Keen [Philip in Hitchcock's 1929 **The Manxman**], were praised - the former in particular for conveying trains of thought in his 'expressions'.

Eliot Stannard, the scriptwriter who had worked on **The Pleasure Garden**, also wrote the script for **The Mountain Eagle**. He developed it from a plot outline by Balcon's lieutenant, Charles Lapworth, concerning a feud between two men in a Kentucky village. It was this story that the trade reviewers saw fit to disparage. 'Rather wandering and not too convincing' was a typical description, in 'Kinematograph Weekly'. At the same time, Hitchcock's promise as a director was admitted: 'Alfred Hitchcock's direction is, as usual, thoroughly imaginative, but in this case he has rather over-stressed the slow tempo ...'.

In sum, W & F, the distribution company handling Hitchcock's first three films, **The Pleasure Garden**, **The Mountain Eagle**, and **The Lodger** (1926), had something of a problem on their hands. Here was a director who had been praised as 'a first rate director and a man of ideas' and whose first film had prompted the response, 'this promises well for further British efforts', and now he had made a turkey. How was the film to be sold?

Trade shows

The trade shows for **The Mountain Eagle** began on October 1, 1926. Interestingly, the trade shows for Hitchcock's third film, **The Lodger**, had begun **before** this, on September 14, 1926. The most probable explanation is that the distributor had realised that **The Lodger** was a stronger film, and was trying to sell **The Mountain Eagle** on the back of **The Lodger**. Ivor Montagu saw Balcon's hand in this: 'Mick had been holding them [**The Pleasure Garden** and **The Mountain Eagle**] up because he had thought it important that Hitch's first picture be a winner'.

Of course, though **The Lodger** was extremely well received by the trade press, we know that it itself had been extensively re-edited by Montagu after W & F decided it was 'too highbrow'. But there seems to be no information as to whether the same treatment was performed on **The Pleasure Garden** and **The Mountain Eagle**.

Release

According to the trade press, the release date for **The Mountain Eagle** was to be May 23, 1927. I can find absolutely no evidence that the film was actually released in Britain. However, from material held by the Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde, it appears that the film **did** have a release in Germany, under the title **Der Bergadler**. Reviews there were generally similar in tone to those of the British trade press,

although more critical of Hitchcock's direction. The 'Reichsfilmblatt' review speaks of the 'sometimes arduously constructed script' and criticises the 'dragging, too broadly delineated directing'. But 'Kinematograph' praises the film: 'The talented young English director Alfred Hitchcock has delivered another example of his extraordinary talent'. From information held by The Library of Congress, it seems that the film was also released in the US (where it was called **Fear O'God**), as the title appears on a poster held in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division. [Peter Noble mentions how certain reference books list the film under its American name: e.g. 'The World Film Encyclopaedia', edited by Clarence Winchester, published in London, 1933. Also, some editions of Truffaut's 'Hitchcock' cite an American distributor: Artlee Indep. Dist.]

In the 'Kinematograph Weekly' of the very week **The Mountain Eagle** was to have been released, there is a full-page colour advertisement for Hitchcock's fourth film, **Downhill** (1927). The issue carries trade-show dates and good reviews for the latter film. With **The Lodger** a success amongst critics and public alike, and a new Hitchcock that looked like it would do well about to be launched, perhaps W & F stuck to their guns and 'shelved' **The Mountain Eagle** to save themselves from losses at the box office and to protect the reputation of their up-and-coming young director, Hitchcock?

Donald Spoto ('The Life of Alfred Hitchcock', 1983) gives no sources for his comments about reactions of audiences to **The Mountain Eagle**:

> No one was really terribly surprised that the London moviegoing public responded with less than wild enthusiasm for a melodrama about Kentucky hillbillies. The film disappeared quickly from the urban circuit. Not long afterward, the negative and all existing copies disappeared altogether, and since then not a single print is known to have survived (a fact that Hitchcock always insisted was entirely as it should be).

Where is 'The Mountain Eagle' now?

Without information as to how many prints of **The Mountain Eagle** were released and in which countries, it is really a question of pot luck as to where to start looking for any surviving material. As a research exercise, I wrote to sixteen archives around the world, asking if they had any information on this particular title. The archives were selected on the basis of the size of their feature film collections: I chose archives that had large holdings of feature films and were members of FIAF - the International Federation of Film Archives.

I received replies from nine archives [including Australia's National Film and Sound Archive, and three archives in the US]. Their letters confirmed my worst expectations that in all probability nothing would be found. These archives may have already checked their collections for 'lost' British films in response to a project instigated by David Meeker, Keeper of Feature Films at the National Film and Television Archive in London, in 1992. This project set out to identify the 100 'Most Wanted' British films that had seemingly vanished for good.

'Missing, Believed Lost' - the Great British Film Search

In other words, the 'Missing, Believed Lost' project was an attempt to identify key films that were considered particularly important to try and find. One hundred titles were selected and an attractive, glossy coffee-table book was produced with photographs and information about each film. The book was intended as a conscience-jogger for collectors who may have valuable heritage films in their vaults, and as a source of information for overseas archives in the hope that they might search through their foreign material for any of the listed titles. The book was also designed to raise awareness of the simple fact that films are missing - collectors may not know that a particular film is being looked for. [The book is still available, edited by Allen Eyles and David Meeker, from BFI Publishing, at a cost of £14.95. Films sought range from Michael Powell's twelve 'quota quickies' to Errol Flynn's first film appearance in Britain and three early Bernard Vorhaus features.]

The good news is that several films featured in the chosen 100 have already been located. [Among them is **Belladonna**, the Gaumont-British drama of 1934, starring Conrad Veidt and based on the novel by Robert

Hichens who also wrote 'The Paradine Case'. It was discovered at the film archive in Prague.] The project has been deemed a great success.

What about 'The Mountain Eagle'?

In much of the publicity surrounding the 'Missing, Believed Lost' project, the lost Hitchcock received the most attention. In his foreword to the book of the project, John Paul Getty asks, 'Are we never going to see Alfred Hitchcock's **The Mountain Eagle**?' How that cry must wake some Hitchcock fans in the night!

In my discussions with David Meeker, I tried to find out the chances of the film's being found. At the risk of breaking the Official Secrets Act, I offer this summary of the situation. 'Somewhere in Europe', said David, 'is an extremely rich man who owns a huge collection of VHS tapes and who has access to Eastern European collections'. [Until recently, it was illegal to be a film collector in Eastern Europe. However, film buffs being the kind of people they are, this activity still went on in an underground way! Once obtained, these films would have been jealously guarded and well looked after. Several exciting finds in the past few years have come from these sources.] It is said that this man has an **extract** of **The Mountain Eagle** on tape, though so far he hasn't let David see it. But as he has previously provided tapes of other rare items, and he isn't a possessive collector, a glimmer of hope remains that it could yet turn up. On the other hand, he is apparently rather disorganised, and may have lost it!

Nor do I know if this 'extremely rich man' is the same person as the 'man in Vienna' mentioned to me by Charles Barr, of the University of East Anglia, as a potential source of film material, so the plot thickens. [One such collector in Vienna runs a full-time cinema in order to show his films to the public. It's said that he has an enormously varied collection, except for films by Godard - whose work he abhors!] A dampener, though, is David Meeker's caution about the 'extract' story: 'It may be a myth'.

Loss and destruction of films

Certainly, David very much doubts that a British print of **The Mountain Eagle** exists. He observes: 'Chances are that there were only half a dozen copies'. Once the film had served its time on the circuit (if, in fact, it was ever released), there would have been little reason for keeping it, especially after sound films took over. Prints were often destroyed by distributors as a precaution against piracy, and scrap merchants might buy film by weight in order to extract its silver content. As **The Mountain Eagle** appeared to be an unsuccessful film in Britain, very probably its negative and prints were 'junked' in the late '20s or early '30s - without even one escaping to lie hidden in a dusty corner of a projection box or to enter someone's collection. There is even some suspicion that it may have been deliberately destroyed because Hitchcock thought it 'a very bad movie'.

A catch-phrase amongst film archivists is that 'Nitrate Won't Wait', and **The Mountain Eagle**, if it is out there somewhere, is slowly decomposing and becoming increasingly susceptible to spontaneous combustion. Films are 'lost' for many reasons. During the silent era, some companies would physically axe film in two to prevent possible piracy of images; unwanted nitrate stock might be set alight to provide fires for film special effects; and film was even used as land fill. BUT! Some film is not lost forever, and there will be more finds over the years [even, we can hope, as spectacular as the one not so long ago at Dawson City in the frozen reaches of Canada, where 510 reels of early silent film were dug up on the site of a disused open-air swimming pool].

How could we find 'The Mountain Eagle'?

It seems to me that the only plausible way of searching for **The Mountain Eagle** is for a kindly benefactor to fund someone to trawl through the still extensive shelves of 'unidentified foreign feature' materials in some overseas archives. With copies of the half-dozen surviving stills from the production, a picture book of the Tyrol, and a little bit of luck, it may yet (I tell myself) still be found!

[Footnote. Let's not forget that a copy of the original scenario does still exist. At least, Truffaut

had one when he interviewed Hitchcock. Presumably, it's now in the Alfred Hitchcock Collection housed by the Margaret Herrick Library of the American Film Institute, or perhaps in the Cinématque Francaise in Paris. Sad to report, neither body replied to the author of the present article when she wrote to them recently. Perhaps an approach by the American-based, and academically-backed, 'Hitchcock Annual' is now in order, with a view to possible publication of the scenario in that journal. 'The MacGuffin' will report developments.]

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Editor's note

1. This article is based on work done by Jenny Hammerton for her MA in Film Archiving at the University of East Anglia. A small amount of additional, or alternative, material has been interpolated, much of it taken from Jenny's own MA dissertation.

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Back to Quebec

Of particular interest to Hitchcock fans at this year's Cannes Film Festival was the screening in competition of first-time director Robert Lepage's **Le Confessional**, set in Quebec. According to Evan Williams, the Canadian-British-French co-production was well-received by critics and film industry buyers, and is notable for its re-creation of the original setting of Hitchcock's **I Confess** (1953).

Its theme is the familiar Hitchcockian one of a search for identity. The year is 1952, and Hitchcock is in Quebec City shooting his film in churches, court-houses, and other public buildings. Meanwhile, sixteen-year-old Rachel has her own real-life drama. She works in the presbytery of her local church - the very one where Hitchcock is filming - and is pregnant. Ashamed, she unburdens her soul to a young priest in the confessional.

There's a parallel story, set in 1989. After three years in China, Pierre Lamontagne (Lothaire Bluteau) has returned to Quebec for his father's funeral. He meets Marc (Patrick Goyette), mysteriously troubled about who he is. As it happens, the two men are brothers, though they don't find this out until a search for Marc's father has led them to the locations of **I Confess** and the Quebec of the 1950s. Past and present converge. A senior civil servant seems to hold the key to both stories ...

A fascinating aspect of **Le Confessional** is that 'Hitchcock' actually appears in it - played by Ron Burrage, a well-known Hitch look-alike, who has doubled for the director in commercials and documentaries and who even shares his birthday (August 13)!

But even more uncanny is the way the production and shooting of Lepage's film dissolved away so many barriers thrown up by passing time. Warners allowed the inclusion of four minutes of original footage from **I Confess**. Much of the recent (mid-1994) filming was done in and around the Church of Saint-Zephirin de Stadacona, where Hitchcock and his crew had also worked. The first assistant director on **Le Confessional** recalls: 'As soon as we went in, we knew that this was the one. The confessional, the altar ... everything had remained as it was.'

The production team itself was based at the Chateau Frontenac, the hotel used by Hitchcock's crew, who also filmed there (the film's climax). Lepage did research and claims to have accurately re-created moments in **I Confess**'s production, such as auditions for local schoolgirls in one of the Chateau Frontenac's rooms.

Publicity for the theremin

Composer Miklos Rozsa (1907-1995) made fine use of the electronic instrument called the theremin in his scores for Billy Wilder's **The Lost Weekend** (1945) and Hitchcock's **Spellbound** (1945).

Now interest in that little-known instrument is about to be revived with the release of a documentary film about its inventor, Leon Theremin. The film is called **Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey**, and is directed by Stephen M. Martin.

Meanwhile, don't bother looking just yet in your Chambers Dictionary for 'theremin'. It isn't there - though a similar instrument, the martenot, **is** listed. On the other hand, we can report that Chambers will probably include 'theremin' in their next edition, and are considering such other interesting new inclusions as 'Hitchcockian' and 'MacGuffin' ...

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Hitchcockiana: a homage ('The Good Son', 1993), a sequel ('The Birds II: Land's End, 1994) and a remake ('Lifepod', 1993)

It will be news to no-one that the contemporary thriller genre is massively influenced by the legacy of Alfred Hitchcock. Purely on the level of verbal and written discourse, it would seem that the word 'Hitchcockian' has become the most abused, and least discriminately applied, adjective in the sorry annals of film publicity and reviewing hype: every second psychological thriller in the video shop claims on its cover to be Hitchcockian, if not 'more Hitchcockian than Hitchcock'!

Yet the almost surreal indefinition that the term Hitchcockian has reached finds a true mirror image in many of the films actually being produced today. Often, it is as if these movies were the product of some swirling, feverish dream, where various themes, motifs and devices from the Hitchcock canon float and combine in a disembodied, sometimes quite incoherent fashion. We may or may not choose to consider this a 'postmodern' phenomenon - there are indeed some very knowing postmoderns, particularly in the American independent scene, who raid Hitchcock for their preferred 'quotations'.

But generally, I would propose that this slightly deranged, all-pervasive air of 'mannerist' homage to Hitchcock is not necessarily such an intellectual or self-conscious gesture. Such a routine level of quotation or 'intertextuality' reflects a moment in the history of film culture when many aspiring creators are natural born movie-nuts. For them, coming up with a good idea for a new film is a process of welding together, in a fairly spontaneous act of 'automatic writing', a large number of beloved memories, choice moments and prime influences from previous classics of the medium. This is how I believe Brian De Palma goes about inventing his scripts; it is probably also the method of Quentin Tarantino, despite all the post facto movie-nut explication of which this director is boundlessly capable.

To gauge the extent of Hitch's influence on current thrillers, one need only take a random example: mine is Joseph Ruben's **The Good Son** (1993), from a script by novelist Ian McEwan (**The Comfort of Strangers**). Ruben, like Curtis Hanson (**The Bedroom Window**, 1987) is currently identified in the industry as a popular director of thrillers; his recent films have included **The Stepfather** (1987) and **Sleeping with the Enemy** (1991). Where McEwan's sources (or influences) are probably Pinter and Polanski, Ruben immediately turns the material into a shameless, and sometimes pointless, Hitchcockian homage. The bayside setting recalls **The Birds**; the house in which the central action occurs looks in certain shots like the Bates mansion from **Psycho**; the final cliff-side clinch evokes the denouement of **North by Northwest**; Elmer Bernstein's music often dips into a Bernard Herrmann pastiche; and stylistically, there are pop-out overhead angles and bravura tracking dolly shots mimicking well-known moments from many a Hitchcock classic.

As to the essential intrigue, it is easily recognisable as the **Strangers on a Train** template, tracing the relationship between two characters (here, two boys) where one relatively 'normal' person becomes implicated (and also, perhaps, psychologically and morally complicit) in the evil crimes of another. This is one of the four most prevalent Hitchcockian models ruling current horror-thriller cinema - the others being the **Rear Window** voyeur story (as reprised, for instance, in De Palma's **Body Double**, 1984), the **Vertigo** story of obsessed love (see De Palma's **Obsession**, 1976), and the **Psycho** story of schizo

identity (see, in particular, Bigas Luna's **Anguish**, 1987, and most of Dario Argento's films). Other Hitchcock films come around less often: the Devlin-Alicia relationship from **Notorious** is borrowed for the excellent action film **Code Name: Alexa** (1992), and elements of **Shadow of a Doubt** are clearly reworked in Lynch's **Blue Velvet** (1986).

The Good Son, however, unambiguously belongs with other **Strangers on a Train** homages such as Hanson's **Bad Influence** (1990), Martin Campbell's weird **Criminal Law** (1989) and the Linda Gray telemovie **Accidental Meeting** (1993). In most of these, the 'pure' Hitchcock influence arrives freighted with a certain 'supplement' - which is precisely the interpretations that have been added to the original by the annals of film criticism, or at least those interpretations which have themselves become 'canonical' through repetition and popularisation. I am thinking particularly of the famous 'transference of guilt' theme first attributed to Hitchcock's films by Claude Chabrol and Eric Rohmer in the 1950s - referring to a certain strange twist of complicity, often coming at the very end of a story, which spreads the aura of evil associated with the just-vanquished villain to other hitherto 'innocent' characters. **The Good Son**, like Tim Hunter's **Paint it Black** (1989) and several of Chabrol's own films, reaches for this final, supposedly 'Hitchcockian' frisson, any way it can - even if the gesture makes precious little dramatic or thematic sense.

* * *

It is a brave filmmaker who takes on the challenge of creating a sequel to a Hitchcock classic; perhaps only Richard Franklin's ingenious **Psycho II** (1983) has satisfied most Hitch buffs. Whoever perpetrated **The Birds II: Land's End** (1994) did not, finally, even want their name on the credits, turning that honour over to the infamous pseudonym 'Alan Smithee'. (I suspect it was directed by its writers, Ken and Jim Wheat, who have together made several horror-thrillers including **Lies**, 1983.)

Hitchcock's **The Birds** (1963) was and remains a unique film, straddling several genres: supernatural fantasy, suspense thriller, romantic melodrama. Its style was chillingly minimal (with Herrmann credited as consultant, only, for Remi Gassman and Oskar Sala's simulated bird noises, not a conventional musical score), and its precise meaning was open, elusive. The birds, attacking in a vast, anonymous mass, could be responding to any number of human conditions, such as environmental crime or interpersonal malaise. They might be seeking revenge, or simply giving advance notice of the apocalypse.

In **The Birds II** these ambiguities are no longer very tantalising. Every interpretative option is ploddingly spelt out: a wise old lighthouse- keeper (Jan Rubes) collects birds murdered by pollution and warns of 'the revenge of nature'; the domestic argument of a couple (Brad Johnson and Chelsea Field) calls up a horde of angry seagulls. Compared to Hitchcock's terrifying attack scenes set in a children's playground, a house and a town square, the moments of violence here look cheap and uninventive.

Although the setting has been changed from Bodega Bay to Land's End, this version strives to recreate many physical details of the original, right down to the domestic fittings. Tippi Hedren makes a pallid return appearance, but at least this time she is spared grievous bodily harm. There are very few contemporary touches: a malaise-ridden family reminiscent of the 'yuppies in peril' common to many recent thrillers; a squad of grotesque, shotgun-toting, law enforcing rednecks straight out of a **Porky's** movie; and split-seconds of gruesome gore reminding us that Hitchcock's masterly film was, with **Psycho** (1960), one of the first 'slasher' movies.

* * *

If **The Birds II** seems to be the end result of influences deriving not only from Hitchcock but also a whole line of intervening movies including John Carpenter's **Halloween** (1978) and the **Friday the 13th** series (1980-89), Ron Silver's Canadian, sci-fi telemovie **Lifepod** (1993) activates a different but overlapping modern mini-tradition. A group of people, of diverse ideologies and stations, trapped together in an enclosed space, playing out a drama of shifting allegiances, suspicion and betrayal ... how could a modern filmmaker not take stock of Ridley Scott's **Alien** (1979), Carpenter's **The Thing** (1982) or indeed Tarantino's **Reservoir Dogs** (1992) in any attempt to remake Hitchcock's **Lifeboat** (1944)?

Remakes always put into startling relief not only changes in film style and narrative mode, but also broad political, historical and cultural changes. **Lifeboat** is a World War II story from the American

side, virtually a 'propaganda film'; it is at the very least a highly didactic one, whose final question, as another pitiful German seaman washes up into the boat, is 'what are you gonna do with people like that?' **Lifepod** belongs to another era, or perhaps two, postdating **Lifeboat**. Firstly, it has the mechanics not of a World War, but a Cold War intrigue: there is a saboteur in the midst, and (as the dialogue makes relentlessly clear) every single character has a reason to be this saboteur - a reason to either blow up the State, or to surreptitiously reinforce it by attacking it. Secondly, it is (like so many action films these days) vaguely an allegory of the Vietnam war, or perhaps of any big bad national power brutishly intervening in the affairs of smaller territories - like a typical **Star Trek** TV episode or movie, its 'backstory' pits the struggling colonists of Venus against the fascist imperialists of 'EarthCorp'.

Many of **Lifepod**'s transformations of **Lifeboat**'s original elements are ingenious as well as telling. In Hitchcock's film the 'oppressed' character-type - slightly ennobled but mainly patronised and marginalised - is a black man. This won't do in 1993; today's black actor takes roughly the part played by William Bendix in the original (the white guy who has his gangrenous leg removed); while the oppressed character becomes a 'little person' whose disability has rendered him a kind of worker-ant slave-labourer of the future (who has replaced one of his arms with a power tool in order to be more effective at his job).

The women's roles have been altered, too. There's an eager journalist with a video camera, matching Tullulah Bankhead with her movie camera in the original, and she develops a relationship with a man from the 'lower classes' (here he is a State-persecuted rebel). But this modern character does not have to suffer the same necessary moral 'degradation' (she gets to keep her camera), nor is her determination to 'get a good story' in the midst of catastrophe made into much of an ethical issue.

It is curious to note, in passing, the way in which contemporary cinema 'hives off' into separate genres the elements that Hitchcock, in his time, was adept at mixing into the one film. As many recent commentators have noted, there are strong and highly significant aspects of both romance and romantic comedy in Hitchcock's art. This is true, in a low-key way, of **Lifeboat**: Bankhead's entire trajectory (the gradual stripping of her material possessions, her eventual avowal of her lowly class origins) is very like what Claudette Colbert went through beside Clark Gable in Capra's **It Happened One Night** (1934). But today it is only the likes of Kathleen Turner in **Romancing the Stone** (1984) who undergoes such a sentimental education; and it is only in the recent tradition begun by the TV series 'Moonlighting' that the love-hate, male-female relations evident in **The 39 Steps** or **North by Northwest** get anywhere near the thrills and spills of an action plot.

The statement that **Lifeboat** is a quite minor Hitchcock film is, I presume, uncontroversial. Pauline Kael's capsule review in '5001 Nights at the Movies' refers to it as 'ham-handed', and few have persuasively contested that view. Hitchcock may have regarded it primarily as a technical challenge, an exercise of sorts - how do you take a story set in one tiny, confined space and make it both visually varied and dramatically engaging? He was still boasting about his achievement in this regard in 1974, to Andy Warhol in 'Interview': 'You know, I had about three boats [of differing sizes] made for that **Lifeboat**'. The 'spatiality' of the film indeed makes for an interesting study: Hitchcock works so much on the principle of separating the characters and then 'focalising' in turn on their various interactions that the film even misses out, finally, on any real or driving sense of claustrophobia. Overall, **Lifeboat** has some nice moments of comic and/or tense interaction, and one certified moment of inadvertent surrealism, when everyone gangs up on Willy (Walter Slezak), and the assembled huddle, shot from the back, hides from us their act of murder.

The remake is not as adventurous in its formal principles. The setting, while still claustrophobic, is spread out over several chambers of a spaceship. Narrational voice-over from the journalist character lends a certain reflective distance to events. Where every visual and narrative detail in Hitchcock's film is crystal-clear, Silver (an accomplished actor here making his directorial debut) adopts the modern style once described so well by J. Hoberman apropos James Cameron's **Aliens** (1986): the atmosphere resembles a chaotic light-show in an otherwise blacked-out auditorium, where bloodcurdling cries and barely legible movements of frantic bodies add to the general sensation of rampant confusion. And although the script of **Lifepod** also has its 'ham-handed' passages - particularly those which laboriously spell out the 'whodunit' intrigue and its ramifications - the film as a whole is as captivating and enjoyable as a superior episode of 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' (and, coming from me, that is a high compliment).

A final note for Hitchcockian detectives. The screenwriting credits for both **Lifeboat** and **Lifepod** are rather mysterious. The opening credit of **Lifeboat** tells us it is 'by John Steinbeck', while the actual screenplay is credited to Jo Swerling. We can assume that Steinbeck supplied the basic story line, perhaps in the form of a 'treatment' commissioned by Zanuck at 20th Century Fox. Yet the script credits for **Lifepod** - which essentially go to Pen Densham, director of the excellent horror movie **The Kiss** (1988) - mention neither Steinbeck nor Swerling, but instead claim inspiration in 'a short story by Alfred Hitchcock and Harry Sylvester'! As they say in the USA: go figure.[1]

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Editor's note

1. To help you figure ... Steinbeck's original treatment for **Lifeboat** was written as a virtual novella of some 40,000 words. It came about in almost exactly the way Adrian Martin's article suggests: in late 1942, the Merchant Marine asked Hollywood to make a propaganda piece on the vital convoys plying the North Atlantic in the face of German U-boat attacks. Hollywood contacted Darryl Zanuck, producer of Steinbeck's/John Ford's 1940 **The Grapes of Wrath**, who in turn asked Steinbeck to do a screenplay. Steinbeck's treatment has never been published in its entirety - see "Steinbeck's **Lifeboat** sunk" in 'MacGuffin' 1. But a copy of the typescript, dated March 26, 1943, is held in the Fox archives, and excerpts from it were included in Professor Robert E. Mossberger's substantial article, "Adrift in Steinbeck's **Lifeboat**", published in 'Film/Literature Quarterly', Fall 1976, pp. 325-38. For further information and a bibliography, see Joseph R. Millichamp, 'Steinbeck and Film' (1983).

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'How about I pump Hitler?': Hitchcock's 'Foreign Correspondent' (1940) and its Sources

The idea behind all my instructions had been, in brief, this: that I had not been sent to China to write about politics or the Chinese Revolution, but to engage in some kind of personal enterprise, capers or high jinks, that would carry on the tradition of romantic adventure (the 'Richard Harding Davis Tradition', it was called) to which my various employers insisted on assigning me.

- Vincent Sheean, 'Personal History' (1935), Chapter 6

The melodramatic incidents were characteristic of the Hollywood technique of the time, which could not be reconciled with the mood of the mass scenes.

- John Howard Lawson, 'Film: The Creative Process' (1964), p. 126 - explaining why his screenplay for **Blockade** (1938) failed as propaganda

The spy thriller has been, for most of its history, a British genre, indeed a major cultural export.

- Michael Denning, 'Cover Stories: Narrative and ideology in the British spy thriller' (1987), p. 6

According to 'Sapper'

Foreign Correspondent has never been released on video in Australia. Here, then, for some of our readers, is a thumbnail description of it: a hugely enjoyable comedy-thriller, about the adventures of a naïve newspaperman, Johnny Jones (Joel McCrae), when he's sent to Europe in 1939 ...

Something striking about this, Hitchcock's second American film, was its inclusion of a torture scene - a new departure for him yet long a specialty of popular English author H. C. McNeile (1888-1937), otherwise known as 'Sapper'. Two decades earlier, Sapper had caused a sensation when, in both the novel and the play of 'Bulldog Drummond', he'd dwelt on the cries of an old man under torture.[1] He'd then gone on to repeat the dose in several more best-selling Drummond books. So why did Hitchcock wait so long to film **his** torture scene? The answer probably has to do with the conservative nature of the British film industry. Though Hitchcock was careful to give the scene a timely point, it's unlikely that he could

have shot it at all back in Britain - whose cinema had never developed an equivalent of the tough American gangster and prison movies.

On the other hand, British popular fiction of the '20s and '30s **had** been suitably accommodating. There, Sapper pioneered the depiction of an easy sadism, which evidently caught a post-War mood. That mood, in turn, seems to have sprung from lassitude, or boredom.[2] In McNeile's case, in 1919 he had found himself looking around for a job after being demobilised from the Royal Engineers, where he'd been a lieutenant-colonel.

And, undeniably, the various Bulldog Drummond books that now flowed from McNeile's pen were nothing if not action-packed, with their hero an ex-Army captain, robust and square-jawed, and their arch-villain, Carl Peterson, a master of disguise given to ingenious scheming on a grand scale. You can easily spot several key elements of **Foreign Correspondent** in these books. As noted, the kidnapping and torture of the film's elderly Dutch statesman called Van Meer (Albert Basserman) has a precedent in 'Bulldog Drummond' itself (where the victim is an American millionaire, Hiram Potts); further, we'll see below that the substitution of Van Meer by his 'double' is prefigured in a couple of the novels; and the film's device of 'splitting' its villain into the gentlemanly Stephen Fisher (Herbert Marshall) and his brutal henchman, Krug, has several counterparts (e.g. once again in 'Bulldog Drummond', where Peterson's chief thug is a certain Henry Lakington). To give a taste of Sapper's prose, here's a passage in which Drummond comes upon his opponents as they use a thumbscrew to torture Hiram Potts for his signature:

> The American gave a strangled cry of terror, and then the unexpected happened. There was a crash as a pane of glass splintered and fell to the floor close beside Lakington; and with an oath he sprang aside and looked up.
>
> 'Peep-bo,' came a well-known voice from the skylight.
>
> 'Clip him one over the jaw, Potts, my boy, but don't you sign.' (Chapter 7)

Hitchcock's film has a comparable moment to this when the hero's jolly friend Scott ffolliott (George Sanders)[3] barges into an upstairs room of a London restaurant, off Tottenham Court Road, and there finds Van Meer being tortured. Though soon taken prisoner himself, and forced to watch at gunpoint the old man's ordeal, he pluckily urges him not to talk. Whereupon a scuffle ensues, allowing ffolliott to dive out the window to seek help. Quickly he directs Johnny Jones and his colleague Stebbins (Robert Benchley) back upstairs, where Van Meer is safe though the crooks have fled.

Now, in 1932, Charles Bennett, who would be **Foreign Correspondent**'s main scriptwriter, had researched the various Bulldog Drummond books before writing for Hitchcock an original treatment called 'Bulldog Drummond's Baby', the basis of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934).[4] Among the books Bennett read was certainly 'The Third Round' (1924), so-called because it represents the pugilistic Drummond's third engagement with Peterson. The novel is itself derivative in some respects of the two earlier books, but what matters for us is that its plot involves a band of crooked merchants who hire Peterson to kidnap a Professor Goodman, who has invented a formula for making cheap industrial diamonds. Afterwards, Peterson and his brutal offsider called Freyder[5] torture the professor in order to try and get the formula. But they've reckoned without Drummond. The latter and his men succeed in rescuing Goodman. A showdown of sorts follows - at sea - though this is soon aborted after Peterson blows up his yacht and is presumed drowned.

In 'Bulldog Drummond', Peterson had concealed a kidnapping by employing a 'double' to masquerade as the victim after the event. This ruse is given various twists in 'The Third Round'. First, the crooks conceal Goodman's kidnapping by faking his death in a laboratory accident and substituting another man's body. Later, because Peterson had initially got close to Goodman by disguising himself as the latter's colleague, Professor Scheidstrun, Peterson decides he had better bribe the **real** Scheidstrun to attend Goodman's funeral service. Hence this incident:

> He [Scheidstrun] stepped out at the church door and paid his fare. A celebrated Scotch chemist whom he knew, and who was entering the church at the same moment, stopped and spoke a few words with him ... Then the Scotchman moved away, and the Professor was about to enter the church when someone touched him on the arm.

He turned to find a young man [Drummond's pal, Algy], wearing an eye-glass, whom he had never seen before in his life.

'Afternoon, Professor,' said the young man.

The Professor grunted. Who on earth was this? Some relative presumably of the dead man.

'You don't seem to remember me,' went on the young man slowly. (Chapter 6)

Needless to say, the person Algy had met earlier had been the **false** Professor Scheidstrun, i.e. Peterson in disguise - and thus the above episode anticipates a famous misrecognition scene in **Foreign Correspondent**, where it's set on the steps of the Amsterdam town hall moments before Van Meer's double is shot. That's to say, Hitchcock's film ingeniously combines two separate incidents from 'The Third Round' (the scene outside the church, the laboratory 'accident') into one.[6]

The novel's church episode is quickly followed by Drummond's discovery that Goodman wasn't killed at all, and is still alive: he's being held prisoner by Peterson, now posing as a country squire called William Robinson, at his house in the New Forest, Hampshire. The novel gives a vivid description of 'Robinson' and Goodman dozing in chairs before an industrial-type furnace as they tend the making of one of Goodman's artificial diamonds (Chapter 9). The glowing furnace casts a circle of light in which the two men sit, and beyond that is darkness. It's a description which prefigures both the chiaroscuro - suitably Dutch! - of the scene in **Foreign Correspondent** where Van Meer is imprisoned in an old windmill,[7] and the visual effect employed during the torture-scene in London, where the crooks train lights on Van Meer to encourage him to talk, and where the background in contrast is pitch-black.

Further, there's a moment in the novel when the dozing Scheidstrun nearly gives Drummond away by waking with a start and then mumbling that he thought he'd seen someone at the door. Peterson investigates, supposes he detects some movement or other, but finds the passage empty and resumes his seat. This seems to anticipate the couple of times in **Foreign Correspondent**'s windmill scene when Jones is nearly caught: for instance, when Van Meer sees a movement behind his captors, who investigate, then conclude that it must have been a bird. (It's said that Hitchcock, to lend atmosphere, had 300 linnets flying around - though no doubt the figure was greatly exaggerated by a publicist!)[8]

I must mention one more Sapper novel. Specifically, I want to invoke the memorable climax of 'The Final Count' (1926), in which Peterson sets out in his giant airship, the 'Megalithic', intending to first poison the invited dignitaries on board and then commit suicide. The evening is calm, and the mood inside the dirigible is festive. Someone remarks on how masses of flowers give the interior a heavy, oriental scent. Drummond, who's one of the guests, likens it to being in a coffin ... Suddenly he realises what's afoot, though he's too late to save one individual, a red-faced man. When Drummond yells out, 'Don't drink. For God's sake - don't drink. It's death', the man merely protests at what he calls 'this damned foolery'. He drains his glass - and falls dead. (Chapter 12)

To an extent, this episode is clearly the forerunner of **Foreign Correspondent**'s own climax, set on a transatlantic clipper. We can't be sure about the **exact** degree of influence, for reasons that will emerge. But certainly the scene in the film begins in a comparable fashion to Sapper's, with the passengers on the clipper carrying on their own desultory conversation and one of them even remarking that it would be pleasant to be able to just keep on flying 'for a long time'. Then, suddenly, the clipper finds itself being shot at by a German warship. Told to put on a life-jacket, a woman passenger protests, 'I never heard of anything so stupid'. Next instant, she's shot dead.

Altogether, in matters of tone, characters, and plot, I see **Foreign Correspondent** as being second only to **The Man Who Knew Too Much** as Hitchcock's film most like the Bulldog Drummond stories - and even then, the British film couldn't include Sapper's more 'sadistic' touches. Hence there's not much to chose, finally, between the two films considered as representing the Bulldog Drummond **spirit**. At times, both come close.

Invoking Richard Harding Davis

Yet the Drummond books were just one of many salient influences on the making of **Foreign Correspondent**,

as this article is intended to show. Donald Spoto's 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983) doesn't note the Drummond link with Hitchcock's film, but it does refer to how Charles Bennett and Joan Harrison re-read John Buchan's 'The Thirty-Nine Steps' (1915) in order to base various chase scenes on what they found there. I'll come to Buchan shortly. Meanwhile, we should be aware that behind both Buchan **and** Sapper were certain literary forebears who had repeatedly depicted Germany as 'the enemy': in particular, the major English spy-novelists William Le Queux, E. Phillips Oppenheim and Erskine Childers. It's clear that Hitchcock knew these authors' work.

Other influences included a number of films and plays that Hitchcock had seen and now remembered - or assigned Bennett and Harrison to research - some of them, ironically, German, or the work of German emigrés. Also, there were the various real-life events and individuals that had recently occupied the stage in Europe and America, including some that remained 'current'. However, at this point let's be clear about a particular thing: though **Foreign Correspondent** is nominally based on Vincent Sheean's 'A Personal History', that non-fiction book - good reading though it remains - contributed next to nothing to Hitchcock's film.

In fact, just about the sole passage in the book that bears on the film is the one I've quoted at the head of this article, invoking Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916). The film begins with a scene in which Johnny Jones's editor at the New York 'Globe', Mr Powers, dispatches the hotheaded ex-crime-reporter to Europe under the name of 'Huntley Haverstock' - after first seeming to toy with the idea of calling him Richard Harding Davis. As Mr Powers notes, Davis had been 'one of our greatest war correspondents forty years ago'. More than that, though, Davis also wrote popular travel books, including 'Our English Cousins' (1894), and many excellent short stories and novels, among them 'In the Fog' (1901), which Graham Greene's brother, Hugh, calls 'one of the very best accounts of foggy Victorian London'.[9] Thus the film's reference to Davis is apt. It sounds a purposeful, cosmopolitan note, which the film will be at pains to reinforce: e.g. by sending off Jones to England on the 'Queen Mary' (accompanied, it's true, by the somewhat mocking strains of 'Rule Britannia'), then later having him travel on 'The Mohican' ... Moreover, by casting Jones in the alleged Richard Harding Davis mould of 'romantic adventurer' (which, in Vincent Sheean's case, he tells us, 'corresponded to no reality whatever'),[10] the filmmakers could structure **Foreign Correspondent** on the lines of that essentially **English** form, the spy thriller. As usual, Hitchcock managed to have it all ways.

A deep debt to Erskine Childers

Pioneering the English thriller tradition, notes Michael Denning, were 'the stories of William Le Queux (beginning in 1891), E. Phillips Oppenheim (beginning in 1887), and the king of them all, Edgar Wallace (beginning in 1905), which were aimed at an adult male audience'.[11] But the first, and one of the best, of the modern English spy novels - an allied genre - was almost certainly 'The Riddle of the Sands' (1903) by Erskine Childers. With its tale of two amateur English yachtsmen in the North Sea who discover plans for a German invasion of their country, it remains eminently readable - and watchable (it was filmed in England in 1978). To my point here, it provided **Foreign Correspondent** with another of its major inspirations, not least the main characters.

In 'Hitchcock as Activist' (1982), Sam Simone suggests that **Foreign Correspondent**'s villain, Stephen Fisher, resembles 'the English writer Houston Stuart Chamberlain, who in the late 1800s left England to become a citizen of Germany and married a German women'.[12] (Here, Simone might have added, but didn't, that the German woman was Wagner's daughter, Eva!) Well, he's probably right. Chamberlain, the son of a British admiral, wrote a number of pro-Teutonic books, such as 'Foundations of the Nineteenth Century' (1899), that eventually helped gain him an audience with Hitler, whom he admired. But what Simone misses is how public controversy about this renegade English aristocrat may well have given Erskine Childers (1870-1922) the idea for his villain in 'The Riddle of the Sands', Herr Dollmann - a disgraced officer in Her Majesty's Navy who goes over to the Germans, taking his trusting English daughter, Clara, with him. In turn, I think it just about incontrovertible that Fisher in **Foreign Correspondent**, and Fisher's daughter Carol (Laraine Day), are based on Dollmann and Clara.

Further, there are similarities between Jones and ffolliott in **Foreign Correspondent** and the two young Englishmen, Davies and Carruthers, in 'The Riddle of the Sands'. Davies is a homespun sailing enthusiast who soon falls in love with Clara, while Carruthers is his dandified pal whom he summons from a boring

desk job in London to join him on the yacht. (In **Foreign Correspondent**, the initially raw and out-of-his-depth Jones quickly falls in love with Carol; later, in Amsterdam, she introduces him in dramatic circumstances to her playboy friend from London, Scott ffolliott, who drives fast cars and who seems to welcome the new diversion from his normally routine journalist's job.) After the two young men's suspicions about Dollmann are aroused, their task of investigating him - and his offsider Von Brüning - are complicated by their not wanting to alarm Clara. More than once, Dollmann tries to arrange their deaths on the treacherous Frisian sands, though each time afterwards he assumes a nonchalant, blameless manner. And, towards the end, both youths must perform individual feats of heroism (e.g. Carruthers has to strike overland, disguised as a rough German seaman). In all of this, we can glimpse parallels with **Foreign Correspondent**. I've already described the film's Tottenham Court Road scene, where ffolliott 'goes it alone' for a time; I'll mention further relevant scenes shortly.

Concerning Clara, Childers regretted that he had seen fit to 'spatchcock a girl' into the story, where she proved 'a horrible nuisance'.[13] He explained that he had only done it at the insistence of his publisher! Happily, Hitchcock and his scriptwriters more than got over any similar 'problem' by making Carol Fisher a typically spirited Hitchcock heroine (just watch her first scene, at the Savoy Hotel) and by giving her a learning curve to match Jones's. In Hitchcock, such a curve involves not just sexual experience, but also a degree of opening up to the world at large, typically represented by old people (here, mainly Van Meer). It's a trope that, once you've spotted it, immediately puts Hitchcock's material ahead of anything by Sapper! And, probably, by Childers. For me, it's another reason for likening Hitchcock's films, in the last analysis, to the all-embracing philosophy of Schopenhauer.

Mind you, Childers's depiction of Clara's relation to her father, both before and after she grasps his treachery, is in the event managed well. And not only does Hitchcock's film copy it in essence, but it's surely significant that his **Notorious** (1946) includes similar material - albeit the psycho-sexual content there is more overt. (In saying this, I don't believe I'm contradicting anything I claimed above.)

Now, what is the clearest case of **Foreign Correspondent**'s borrowing from the Childers novel occurs when the clipper carrying the principal characters towards America is shot down in the sea. In both novel and film, the traitor makes his apologies to his daughter for his past actions, then quietly slips away and deliberately drowns himself. The episode in Chapter 28 of the novel concludes: 'We cruised about for a time, but never found him.'

Naturally, John Buchan

'The Thirty-Nine Steps' by John Buchan (1875-1940) is yet another of these English novels that climaxes in, or beside, the sea. In its exciting last chapter, the gang of Germans whose leader is a master of disguise are tracked down and their yacht seized. Yet overall, in spite of Donald Spoto's claims, there's little that bears directly on **Foreign Correspondent**: a secret aerodrome near an oil mill (barely mentioned), and that's about it.

More pertinent for us are the generic similarities of all these books by Sapper, Childers and Buchan. For instance, Michael Denning notes how they all concern amateur agents combating villains who are professionals (whether largely self-employed, like Carl Peterson, or working for the German government, like Herr Dollmann). Typical too is how they begin with a man bored.[14] Thus the hero of 'The Thirty-Nine Steps', Richard Hannay, starts by telling us: 'I returned from the City about three o'clock on that May afternoon pretty well disgusted with life.'

When Jones is sent for by Mr Powers at the start of **Foreign Correspondent**, the camera discovers him at his desk making elaborate paper cut-outs. From this 'unprofessional' conduct on Jones's part we guess that soon he'll jump at the chance of action. His own words will confirm it: 'Give me an expense account and I'll cover anything.' Moreover, like his predecessors in English fiction, he'll be rewarded in another way, when his adventures restore his sense of self-respect.

It takes time, though. In Europe, he's got a lot to learn. Both literally and figuratively, in these early scenes he's always backing into trouble and having to do double-takes - as when in the windmill he backs through a door and in the room behind him discovers Van Meer, whom he'd supposedly seen killed in Amsterdam. (A related motif is the one whereby he's repeatedly losing his bowler hat, something that

runs through the film until he finally settles for wearing his tried-and-true American fedora.) In this respect, the Buchan novel that most comes to mind is 'Mr Standfast' (1919), whose German villain poses as an academic pacifist and calls himself Moxon Ivery. Not till halfway through the novel (Chapter Ten) does Richard Hannay understand how Ivery 'had played with **me** ... since the first day ... The only meagre consolation was that [Ivery's] gang had thought me dangerous enough to attempt to murder me ...'.[15] You think of how, in **Foreign Correspondent**, Stephen Fisher, head of the so-called Universal Peace Party, had been present in Mr Powers's office when Jones was 're-born' as 'Huntley Haverstock' - and how, in Europe, Fisher's men try more than once to kill Jones/'Haverstock'. (Fisher himself repeatedly, and nonchalantly, pretends to be blameless.)

In particular, there's a resemblance between an incident in the novel's Chapter Five, set aboard a ship plying along the Scottish coast, and the scene in Hitchcock's film where Fisher's hired assassin, Mr Rowley (Edmund Gwenn), tries to kill Jones in a London street. In the novel, Hannay is standing in the bows of the ship near the rail, holding onto a rope because of the worsening weather, when suddenly a shipboard acquaintance called Gresson cannons into him, sending him over the side.[16] Hannay manages to grab the ship's anchor and regain the deck, where he hears Gresson call out to him in mock concern. The truth is, Gresson is working for Ivery ... In Rowley's case, he pushes Jones into the path of a truck, which manages to swerve. Rowley then has to pretend that he pushed Johnny to **save** him from the truck.

Here seems to be the place to mention how Buchan in his best novels typically shows a keen weather-eye. Indeed, Buchan-authority Howard Swiggett referred at times to his subject's 'divine glimpses of weather',[17] clearly a matter that isn't given great attention in your average thriller. But **Foreign Correspondent** isn't that, and at the least it reveals a scrupulous regard on Hitchcock's part for weather matters. From the sunny interior of Mr Powers's office high up in the 'Globe' building, to rainy Amsterdam, to the gritty streets of London, and finally a turbulent Atlantic, Hitchcock obviously strove to create a convincing physical texture - matched, as we'll see, by his attention to matters of precise lighting and cinematography.

A possible nod to 'Dornford Yates' - and to Keats's 'To a Nightingale'

Hitchcock may have got Rowley's name from the 'Chandos' series of thrillers by C. W. Mercer (1885-1960), writing as 'Dornford Yates', where it's the name of a loyal man-servant who participates in all of Chandos and company's adventures. Further, I suspect that the detectable influence of Yates on **Foreign Correspondent** would have been greater if several hundred feet of location footage hadn't been lost when a ship bringing it from Europe was torpedoed in the Atlantic.[18] For, surely, what went to the bottom was largely footage intended by Hitchcock to accompany a car chase through Holland, the sort of chase Yates helped pioneer in fiction with stories like 'How a Telegram Came for Jill' (1922). In the released version of the film, there seems a sharp jump just before ffolliott's car, pursuing the killer of 'Van Meer', arrives at an open road where we see several windmills. That is, instead of a protracted and exciting chase like the ones Hitchcock filmed elsewhere (in **Young and Innocent**, say, or **Torn Curtain**) - or the sort of thing that prompted Ian Fleming to praise Yates for his masterly handling of 'a half-dozen pages of hot-pursuit prose' -[19] we get largely just the **suggestion** of time passing with the inclusion of one or two diverting gags: most notably, the sight-gag involving the old fellow who wants to cross the road with his jug of milk.

(But that sight-gag is a beauty. True, it may derive some of its generic inspiration from Yates's business with a hen in the above-named story. But note also the variations in the old man's three attempts to cross, and the cut to a closer shot for the middle attempt, in which he **exaggerates** the bend of his knee as he steps from the kerb.)

I've already mentioned **Foreign Correspondent**'s clipper scene more than once. There will be further such references. For instance, when Carol Fisher says, 'It would be nice if we could just keep flying for a long time', she may be unwittingly invoking a now almost forgotten play of the '20s, 'Outward Bound' by Sutton Vane - a play whose characters meet on a liner where they discover that they're all dead and bound for purgatory. That play is referred to in Chapter 11 of Sapper's 'The Final Count' as 'strange and wonderful ... no break - you just go on', and it was filmed by Hollywood in 1930, when it starred Leslie Howard.

But isn't there also a Keatsian strain hereabouts? Certainly such a strain surfaces in some later Hitchcock films (e.g. **Suspicion**, **Vertigo**). At this point, I'm reminded not just of the funerary references at the climax of 'The Final Count', but also of how in Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' (Chapter Eighteen), when Hannay's girlfriend Mary awaits him, as she thinks, at an Italian inn in the small hours of the night, she distracts herself by reciting Keat's 'Nightingale' - in effect, invoking the same lines Hitchcock seems to have often remembered, about being 'half in love with easeful Death' and ceasing 'upon the midnight with no pain'. (Mary will find that the person who sent her the assignation note wasn't Hannay at all but Moxon Ivery - to whom she had earlier feigned a connubial interest. Clearly this is **Notorious** territory again. But the essential point for us is the implied alliance of love and death ...) Specifically, in the case of **Foreign Correspondent**, we may catch a note of mock-Nirvana, so typical of some Hitchcock climaxes. And perhaps we may infer that Hitchcock was determined, on this occasion at least, that we should **not** be spared further pain ...[20]

Working for Walter Wanger

After the success of **Rebecca** (1940), David Selznick chose to hire out its director's services, and thus Hitchcock found himself employed by another independent producer, Walter Wanger. Wanger's interest in topical politics had already led him to take up such projects as **Gabriel Over the White House** (1933), **The President Vanishes** (1934), and **Blockade** (1938); he also produced such classic films as Lang's **You Only Live Once** (1937) and Ford's **Stagecoach** (1939). Hitchcock seems to have dutifully looked at several of these. Now, I could only speculate at the possible influence on his own project of **The President Vanishes** (directed by William Wellman, from a non-Nero Wolfe novel by Rex Stout), as I've never seen it, but certainly its synopsis sounds familiar: something about the US president dropping out of sight for a few days, pretending to have been kidnapped by some fascist businessmen, so that his country won't be drawn into a European war. On the other hand, in the case of Frank Borzage's **History is Made at Night**, which that director filmed for Wanger in 1937, we're on surer ground.

Borzage's comedy-drama, with its delirious title ('the most romantic in the history of cinema' - Andrew Sarris), climaxes at sea, in a liner's head-on collision with an iceberg. Borzage shot this event entirely from on board the ship. Such a (necessarily) confronting manner of filming had already impressed Hitchcock, who in 1936 wrote an article for 'The Picturegoer' in which he referred to the use of subjective camera to involve an audience - and cited the case of Howard Hughes's **Hell's Angels** (1930) which put the viewer right in the pilot's seat during a crash.[21] Well, **Foreign Correspondent** itself is often praised for its head-on filming at the moment when the clipper crashes at sea. But what really nails the direct connection between Borzage's film and Hitchcock's is a matter of shared word-play. In **History is Made at Night**, a head-chef (Leo Carillo), who has an accent, both mis-quotes and mis-pronounces a line from Kipling. 'The female of the spices is more dead than the male', he tells his headwaiter friend (Charles Boyer). He means that women can bring you undone! In **Foreign Correspondent**, a journalist covering the reception for Van Meer at the London Savoy has similar thoughts. As Carol Fisher begins to defend the work for peace of 'well-meaning amateurs', one of Jones's companions at the press table looks bored and mutters, 'The female of the speeches is deadlier than the male!' (**Kipling** wrote, 'For the female of the species is more deadly than the male' - and we can be grateful that Sapper, at least, got it right in the title of his most elegant Bulldog Drummond book, 'The Female of the Species', 1928!) But Jones shushes his colleague and starts to pay rapt attention to Carol.

Another Wanger film of this period was Tay Garnett's comedy-adventure, **Trade Winds** (1939). Here already, as its credits show, were assembled some of the technical talents of **Foreign Correspondent**: cinematographer Rudolph Maté, composer Alfred Newman. And once again Hitchcock's film would re-work elements of the earlier movie. For instance, foreshadowing its own 'travelogue' plot, **Trade Winds** begins with the image of a revolving globe - as **Foreign Correspondent** starts with a close-up (behind the credits) of a turning globe, then pulls back to reveal that what we've been looking at is actually the top of the 'Globe' building in New York.

Moments later, in Hitchcock's film, we come upon Jones hard at play in his office! His idleness is explained by the fact that he's about to be fired for having slugged a policeman, albeit this was 'in the line of duty'. Jones's counterpart in **Trade Winds** is the police detective (Frederic March) whom we first meet 'in conference', i.e. womanising, in his office. The reason he's not out on a case is that he has just been fired for getting too intimate with the sheriff's daughter.

And again, in **Foreign Correspondent**, it looks for a moment that Jones won't be given the overseas job that Mr Powers has in mind for him, because a more intellectual colleague - whose tome 'The Twilight of Feudalism' got good reviews - offers himself instead. In **Trade Winds**, when the Police Commissioner (Thomas Mitchell) is casting about for someone to track down a murder suspect (Joan Bennett), a particularly staid cop (Ralph Bellamy) offers to do it - but finds himself passed up in favour of Frederic March.

I mentioned Wanger's Spanish Civil War movie, **Blockade**, above. It was directed by German emigré William Dieterle, and starred Henry Fonda and Madeleine Carroll. Hitchcock, though, may possibly have seen in it mainly an object-lesson in how **not** to try and impart a message concerning current events. As John Howard Lawson indicates, the film's melodrama wasn't so much put at the service of the message as made to compete with it. Accordingly, you'll find in **Foreign Correspondent** no general denunciation of Hitler and the Axis powers, just the emotive orchestration of particular events and characters, and an overall design. (To see things in terms of one essential and undivided process was Schopenhauer's powerful lesson. For both him and Hitchcock, Cartesian 'dualism' was alienating ...)[22]

By emotive events and characters, I mean everything from the pain we watch being inflicted on the gentle Van Meer to the fanaticism of Fisher (something which aligns him with bully-boy Krug and alienates him from Carol). As for 'messages', at the most you have Van Meer's fierce denunciation, under torture, of 'beasts like you' who 'will never conquer **them** ... the little people everywhere who give crumbs to birds' - and Jones's final exhortation to America to 'keep those lights burning'. But now note: that last scene is set in a broadcasting studio, and therefore permissibly uses a radio journalist's rhetoric. Crucially, contemporary audiences would have recognised how the scene invokes no less a person than CBS war correspondent Ed Murrow (1908-65), who, throughout the War, broadcast dramatic and accurate reports of events in Europe, including the Battle of Britain (which was still being fought at the very moment of **Foreign Correspondent**'s release).[23] In other words, Murrow was the living embodiment of the Richard Harding Davis tradition.

By contrast, how extreme had been the licence taken at the end of **Blockade** when Henry Fonda, playing a Spanish peasant, had stepped still further out of his credible character and addressed the audience directly to ask: 'Where is the conscience of the world?'

The William Dieterle connection

In short, good intentions aren't always enough. Still, Hitchcock had extrinsic reasons for watching **Blockade**, despite its flaws. It co-starred Madeleine Carroll, whom he had directed in two of his British pictures (**The 39 Steps**, **Secret Agent**). In addition, it represented Dieterle's first film after his Academy Award-winning **The Life of Emile Zola** (1937), for Warners. Let's note here, too, how when Dieterle went on soon afterwards to make **The Hunchback of Notre Dame** (1939) for RKO, that film's two leads were Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara, both of whom, like Hitchcock, were newly arrived in Hollywood from England - where they had just starred together in Hitchcock's **Jamaica Inn**.

Now, in 'MacGuffin' 11, I illustrated at some length Hitchcock's interest in the work of **various** German emigrés - not just Dieterle - who had come to Hollywood. (He himself, of course, had worked in Germany for a year in 1925.) At one point, I showed how an 'umbrellas' scene in **The Life of Emile Zola** was the forerunner of a similar scene in **Foreign Correspondent**. This particular link between the two films is one I must now insist on, notwithstanding that Hitchcock's film employed the gifted William Cameron Menzies for 'special production effects', and that it's true Menzies had just come from working on Sam Wood's **Our Town** (1940) which has a funeral scene with black umbrellas.[24] For the fact is that **Dieterle's** umbrellas scene, in both its elaborateness and its emphasis on the crowd as a near-abstract force, is far closer to Hitchcock's depiction of a whole sea of umbrellas (through which the killer of 'Van Meer' escapes) than is **Our Town**'s quite modest and deliberately stagy hillside scene, representing Emily Webb's funeral ...

That brings me to **The Hunchback of Notre Dame**. It's a splendid film, and full of distinctive Dieterle content and emphases. For instance, it climaxes in one of the director's characteristic 'mob' scenes, in which the followers of the King of the Gypsies (Thomas Mitchell) use force to try and break the power of the corrupt nobles. At other times, the populace are shown as capable of combining peacefully to further

their own interests, particularly by means of the new invention called the printing press. But the film's biggest and most important 'prop' is Notre Dame Cathedral itself, referred to as a place of sanctuary. Here, Quasimodo (Laughton), the hunchback bell-ringer, makes his home. Though he's both deformed and deaf, he has the true understanding and gentle heart of a child. To Esmeralda (O'Hara), whom he rescues from the evil Frollo (Cedric Hardwicke), who is in league with the nobles, he gives a present of a bird in a wooden cage.

The symbolism here may remind you at once of, say, the depiction of Frankenstein's monster in James Whale's 1931 film, and of the blind but wise anchorites in, respectively, Whale's **The Bride of Frankenstein** (1935) and Hitchcock's **Saboteur** (1942), both of whom shelter fugitives from injustice. But in view of Quasimodo's association with birds, and his description of the Paris populace (whom he can see from his bell-tower) as 'little people', the question I want to ask is: was it effectively Quasimodo who provided Hitchcock with the idea for giving these attributes/phrases to the gentle Van Meer in **Foreign Correspondent**? And, beyond that, was it the Notre Dame scenes in Dieterle's film that helped inspire Hitchcock's windmill and Westminster Cathedral scenes?

I think there's compelling evidence for answering 'yes' to both questions, especially when you know that London's Westminster Cathedral is, for that city's Catholics, the counterpart of Notre Dame. A 1940s book on London quotes a description of Westminster as '"beyond all doubt the finest church that has been built for centuries"' (the book dates it from 1895).[25] Moreover, a notable feature of Westminster is its campanile (bell-tower), 284 feet high. 'Visitors may ascend to the top by means of the highest passenger-lift in London.' It's from here that, in **Foreign Correspondent**, the treacherous Rowley plummets - just as, in Dieterle's film, Frollo is thrown by Quasimodo from the bell-tower of Notre Dame.

In both films, for their respective cathedral scenes, Alfred Newman was called on to provide suitable choral music. (In **Foreign Correspondent**, when Jones and Rowley arrive at Westminster, there's a requiem mass in progress. That's why they decide against going right inside, and take the lift up the tower instead.) Of course, both directors' films are also notable for some striking visual effects. In Dieterle's case, he staged an elaborate climax whose action occurs both in the bell-tower (where Quasimodo and Frollo struggle) and on the ground outside (where the mob are ramming the cathedral door). In this, there's an exact parallel with the climax of **Frankenstein** - except that the building there is an old windmill. In turn, curiously enough, that windmill is the prototype of the one in **Foreign Correspondent** ...

Sorting all this out, what I'm saying is simply that I believe **Foreign Correspondent** artfully amalgamates various effects that Hitchcock had admired in Whales's and Dieterle's films - but that this wasn't fortuitous. Clearly, Dieterle's film itself was drawing on the earlier film, at some level. As for my claim that **Frankenstein**'s windmill is the prototype of the one in **Foreign Correspondent**: just look at the actual mill machinery, with its cogs and wheels, in both films! One is a replica of the other.[26] (By contrast, the mills in a couple of earlier Hitchcock films - **The Manxman** and **Young and Innocent** - are nothing like the one in **Foreign Correspondent**.)

Other films, other influences

Speaking of the windmill in Hitchcock's film ... a notable feature of its design is its tallness, its verticality, in contrast to the flat Dutch countryside around it. Apart from other factors, such as fidelity to a real Dutch landscape, what we may detect working here are further 'Germanic' principles of art design (an emphasis on angles, etc.).

Up to a point, Leslie Halliwell is helpful about such matters. For instance, his 'Filmgoer's Companion' notes of **Frankenstein** how several of its elements were borrowed from the 1922 German film **The Golem**. The latter was directed by Paul Wegener, a former actor who had worked in Max Reinhardt's company with Albert Basserman (see below). It was co-scripted by Henryk Galeen, a Dutchman working in Germany. On the other hand, Halliwell doesn't mention an earlier film of the same title and made by the same team (1915), nor a German serial version of a similar story, **Homunculus** (1916).[27]

Again, Halliwell's splendidly entertaining essay on **Foreign Correspondent**, in 'Halliwell's Harvest' (1986), suggests an actual German source for Hitchcock's mill, with its interior 'all creaking cog-wheels

and shafts of sunlight and shadowed groupings spied on through frames of wooden beams'. That source is G. W. Pabst's **Die Dreigroschenoper/The Threepenny Opera** (1931).[28] Unfortunately, Halliwell doesn't so much as raise the possibility of **Frankenstein**'s influence (let alone contributions from authors like Buchan and Sapper).

Still on matters Teutonic, here are a couple of dates. On April 9, 1940, Germany invaded Denmark. On May 10, it was Holland's turn. And now I want to speculate about why **Foreign Correspondent** gives its villain, Stephen Fisher, a Great Dane as a companion. In the first place, perhaps that particular breed of dog suggested itself to Hitchcock because a Great Dane accompanies the grandfather (C. Aubrey Smith) in John Cromwell's **Little Lord Fauntleroy** (1936), made for Selznick. Anyway, the choice was a master-touch on Hitchcock's part. Not only does it underline Fisher's aristocratic status (with his forebears to be found in books by Childers and Buchan), but it hints at his true allegiance: despite its name, the Great Dane is German, and was once used in that country as a boarhound. Perhaps, too, such a dog constitutes in the film a subtle reminder of Germany's recent invasion of Denmark.

Above, I mentioned Holland's flatness. When the Germans invaded **that** particular country, their advance was helped by the geography. Their troops and tanks surged ahead with little hindrance, their planes availed themselves of impromptu airfields. And, doubtless, that same geography was what gave Hitchcock his idea of staging a cross-country chase in Holland (albeit curtailed, for reasons I've suggested), and of having the crooks establish a private airfield there. Further, perhaps he knew that audiences would readily understand the factors involved, and therefore wouldn't be troubled about credibility ...

Now a note on **Foreign Correspondent**'s actors. When you investigate the casting of Joel McCrae as its amiable lead - of course, Hitchcock had originally wanted Gary Cooper - you find that his most recent role had been as a young would-be diplomat in Lloyd Bacon's **Espionage Agent** (1939), for Warners. There, his character falls in love with a German spy (Brenda Marshall) - who works for something called the World Peace Organisation in Switzerland. (As a likely source for the Universal Peace Party of **Foreign Correspondent**, this must nonetheless be considered with Moxon Ivery's cover as an academic pacifist in 'Mr Standfast', plus another possible source I'll mention shortly.) Halliwell's 'Film Guide', after noting the film's anti-isolationist message directed at its American audience, describes **Espionage Agent** as 'a rather sketchy cross between **Foreign Correspondent** and **Confessions of a Nazi Spy** [1939]'. That about matches my own memories of it, from years ago.

I've still fainter memories of the Dr Kildare films, but that popular MGM series is where Laraine Day made her name, beginning with **Calling Dr Kildare** (1939). She played Nurse Mary Lamont, the girlfriend of Kildare (Lew Ayres). Such a capable character would seem a most suitable predecessor of Carol Fisher in **Foreign Correspondent**.

As I've already noted, Albert Basserman had been a distinguished German stage - and screen - actor. In 1940, though, he was newly arrived in Hollywood. William Dieterle got to direct him first, in the Warners biopic **Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet**. Then came Hitchcock's turn, to his film's great good fortune. Impeccably, Basserman's Van Meer gives us the character's tired, tough decency, that of a statesman rendered helpless - like Holland itself - by the forces of evil and his own painfully obvious frailty and isolation. (For an instructive comparison-contrast, see Robert Siodmak's 1931 **Voruntersuching/ Interrogation**, where Basserman plays the story's investigating officer, Judge Bienert, a bustling, vigorous character - initially, at least - who wears a three-piece suit complete with tie and winged collar, and has fashionably waved hair.)[29]

It's interesting to note how expressive are the eyes of both Van Meer and Fisher. Van Meer's are typically wide open, his gaze at once inward and straight ahead; even when he's drugged and being threatened with torture, his eyes show that he's aware but still defiant. In Fisher's case, his beady eyes are piercing and intelligent, yet nearly always darting about. This trait is initially used for comic effect when, in Powers's office, Fisher jokes about the 'christening' of 'Huntley Haverstock' - and rolls his eyes. But later his unsteady gaze carries a more sinister suggestion, of slyness or, at the least, of his seeking to avoid being trapped. This was English actor Herbert Marshall's third appearance in a Hitchcock film, and excellent.

A broader comic effect is achieved with darting eyes by some of the other characters, in particular by the actor playing 'the laughing Latvian', as Jones calls him. This little man might almost be a harmless

version of Peter Lorre in **Secret Agent** (1936), i.e. the character known there as 'The Hairless Mexican' (where, despite his frequent grinning, he's both lecherous and deadly). Jones first meets him in London during the reception at the Savoy. That scene is making a serious point in the film, to the effect that the soon-to-be Allies are a heterogeneous group, far from united for the struggle ahead (cf **Saboteur**, **Lifeboat**, **Torn Curtain**). But it's treated by the filmmakers with an eye to comedy, as when Jones, who's pursuing Carol, palms off the Latvian onto a Scotsman by requesting information about the origins of the kilt. In fact, there are several times in the Latvian's scenes when you think, too, of the Marx Brothers - and not just of Harpo, either. For instance, a memorable scene in Amsterdam's Hotel Europe, in which hotel staff and a couple of bogus policemen all crowd into Jones's room, is surely paying homage to the stateroom episode in Sam Wood's **A Night at the Opera** (1935).

As we're back (it seems) in bustling Amsterdam, I'll note one or two more sources for the assassination scene. Because that scene is set on a flight of steps, and because we're shown the face of 'Van Meer' in bloodied close-up, Halliwell suggests Eisenstein's **The Battleship Potemkin** (1925) may have been an influence.[30] Less speculative, because we've Hitchcock's own word on this, is the actual 'look' of the scene. It's shot in the rain, remember. Hitchcock once said that what he was after here, photographically, was a 'rather wishy-washy newsreel quality'.[31] His thinking is logical, given that the assassination would, in theory, soon be featuring on newspaper front-pages and the like. Moreover, this particular effect is just one of many in the film, all contributing to the 'design' I spoke of before. In this case, notice the significant contrast with the 'Cambridge Arms' scene, in which a moving camera catches a couple wheeling a pram past ivied walls. And now a question or two. Surely that pram isn't another **Potemkin** borrowing? Or is it? (Here, too, Hitchcock's embracive thinking, his truly broad sense of time-space, would merely be like Kant's and Schopenhauer's ...)

Hitchcock was a British filmmaker

After Hitchcock arrived in America, his outlook became suitably more cosmopolitan - and, in a technical sense, pessimistic. In short, Schopenhauerian! To say that, though, is merely to note how the potential that in his case was always there fulfilled itself. Hitchcock was always a Romantic-eclectic filmmaker, something else that the present article is about. Yet his British roots now only thrust themselves deeper. I began this article by mentioning how, in making **Foreign Correspondent**, he seized the opportunity to 'quote' a particular passage from Sapper, one he'd effectively had to repress. But naturally his memory of British films was also still active.

Foreign Correspondent seems to refer back to at least two British movies, apart from Hitchcock's own. Albert de Courville's **Seven Sinners** (1936) was scripted by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat just before they wrote the script for **The Lady Vanishes** (1938). Fast-moving and fun, it includes a train crash filmed from the driver's cabin (though that had already been done, I fancy, in Lang's 1928 **Spione/ Spies**).[32] Also, it's another work whose villain uses a peace organisation - this time called The Pilgrims of Peace - as cover.

Then there's Robert Stevenson's **Non Stop New York** (1937), whose last half-hour takes place aboard a transatlantic airliner. Several members of the cast came straight from Hitchcock's **Sabotage** (e.g. John Loder, Desmond Tester, William Dewhurst, Peter Bull). Set in 1940, the film has an element of science fiction about it: a notable suspense scene involves the villain's attempt to push an unwary victim from the plane's 'observation platform'! Not only is he unsuccessful, but he later falls to his own death when his parachute fails to open ...

Another of the film's anticipations of **Foreign Correspondent** - the footage looks practically identical - occurs when the airliner nearly crashes at sea and we're shown the water skimming under the pilot's window. Still, if Hitchcock's film did in fact borrow from both of these earlier films, that was no more than its due. Both of the British pictures were made for Gaumont, and both reprise memories of the villain with the top joint of his little finger missing from **The 39 Steps** (1935), another Gaumont picture. The villain in **Seven Sinners** has a distinctive way of holding his cigar; the villain in **Non Stop New York** betrays himself when someone recognises his peculiar, one-handed manner of striking a match.

Adenoid Hynkel = Adolf Hitler ≠ Alfred Hitchcock

Halliwell's 'Film Guide' says of Charles Chaplin's anti-Hitler film, **The Great Dictator** (1940), that its 'final speech to the world is a grave mistake'. Halliwell awards it a mere two stars, while giving Mitchell Leisen's comedy-melodrama, **Arise My Love** (1940), which ends with a plea against American isolationism, three stars; to **Foreign Correspondent**, Halliwell awards his four-star accolade.

Well, I'm one of those who still find much to admire in Chaplin's film, and not least its final speech. Chaplin delivers it superbly - the version we hear in Richard Attenborough's **Chaplin** (1992) is a travesty. Also, I think its sentiment that the kingdom of God is within us is essentially true (but see 'MacGuffin' 8 on the 'transcendental pretence').

So how do I rate the closing scene of **The Great Dictator** against the corresponding scene in **Foreign Correspondent**? Before answering that, let me note that Chaplin's 'Autobiography' reveals him to have been a Schopenhauerian - of sorts! (He admits to never having read Schopenhauer 'thoroughly'.)[33] Of these two acclaimed British filmmakers, then, I would suggest that one is a **theoretical** Schopenhauerian, the other a Schopenhauerian **in practice** (if unknowingly so?).

Chaplin's film doesn't acknowledge - or otherwise heed - the limits of its own subjectivity. What a pity, for example, that the 'kingdom of God' reference proceeds to specify the exact chapter in Luke's gospel that is its 'authority' - you wonder how non-Christian viewers feel at this point.[34] And isn't there also a trace of fanaticism here, apart from just a detestation of Hitler?

Now, I'm aware that the end of **Foreign Correspondent** was added at the last minute, and that Donald Spoto thinks it 'dramatically unjustified, out of character and out of line with everything that has preceded'.[35] That's not how I see it, for reasons I've already partly given. In addition, I can't forget that bombs were actually falling in London as Johnny Jones was speaking - and not just on the screen. Further, I feel the power of the speech's urgent, 'populist' language ('Hang on to your lights, America') contributed to order by Ben Hecht. Perhaps above all, I would note the business-like way the message is delivered: there's no energy wasted on denouncing Hitler. That had effectively been done earlier by Van Meer when, under torture, he'd spoken rather wildly of 'beasts like you [who] will devour each other'.

By contrast, the little barber's final speech in **The Great Dictator** always ran the risk of alienating some of its audience, of seeming too dreamy, too inward. And it's 'broken-backed' (as an ex-colleague of mine might have said). It must first work to denounce the Nazi 'brutes' who 'treat you like cattle' before it can start to exhort the viewer to 'do away with national barriers' and fight for 'all men's happiness' - which are worthy ideals, doubtless, but in the then-prevailing world circumstances confusing and/or impractical.

There's even ammunition here for those who would accuse Chaplin of being a communist. Horror! That quite apart, I can't ignore the underlying simple-mindedness that seems to inform the film. (Never was Chaplin further from Dickens, with whom he is sometimes compared: another simpliste notion, I'd say.) So here's the analogy I suggest. It's well-known that Hitler's Minister for Propaganda, Dr Goebbels, differed from the Führer in the matter of their respective attitudes to populist movies. Where Hitler wanted Nazi films to carry overtly political messages (as in the crudely 'instructive' 1940 feature, **Der Ewige Jude/The Eternal Jew**, which flopped at the box office), Goebbels showed that he truly understood the power of entertainment as a propaganda tool. As Dr Hans Feld has put it, the Borgia-like Goebbels used populist films as the chalice for his poisoned pill.[36] Further, we know that when Goebbels saw **Foreign Correspondent**, he expressed his great admiration of it ...[37]

Accordingly, in this matter, I'd put Hitler and Chaplin in one camp, Goebbels and Hitchcock in the other. Call it a matter of 'realpolitik'. And now let's look some more at **Foreign Correspondent**. In effect, the scene at the London Savoy makes a joke of the untimeliness of Chaplin's call for world unity. The most that can be asked is that the Allies acknowledge their common cause. The scene's dialogue mentions Poland, Ireland, Istanbul, Honolulu, Latvia, Scotland, and finally Greece - as well as such languages as French, German, and 'pig Latin' - but the only thing that works as a 'universal language' is ... alcohol. As I showed in 'MacGuffin' 8, an identical 'Tower of Babel' theme runs through **Torn Curtain** (1966), which is set in (a pre-1989) Germany.

Moreover, it's precisely through matters of language that **Foreign Correspondent** exerts much of its near-subliminal appeal to matters of common interest and national pride. Here are two typical instances. When the bogus policemen come to Jones's room at the Hotel Europe with their demand that he accompany them to police headquarters - shades of **The 39 Steps** - they assure him that 'We all speak English'. Astonished, Jones exclaims, 'You **all** speak English? That's more than I can say for **my** country.' A few scenes later, we hear Fisher compliment Krug, of all people, on the 'great delicacy' with which he uses the English language ...

Foreshadowings

Having noted parallels with films that came out in the same year as **Foreign Correspondent** (Chaplin's **The Great Dictator**, Leisen's **Arise My Love**), I should probably discuss the several films that came out after it and appear to have been influenced by it in their turn. Hitchcock's film **as** source. But this time I must resort to a mere token gesture: see 'Odd Spot' in this issue.

Yet, having just mentioned the scene in Fisher's study between him and Krug, I'd like to remark on one particular Hitchcock technique which I'll call 'literal foreshadowing', and which may serve to underline the director's empathy with the needs of his audience, which is what we've been discussing.

The truth is, I can remember only one other film that has used this technique in the way I'll now describe. I'm thinking of David Lean's **Great Expectations** (1946). For the first third of the film, we get to know the boy called Pip who lives with his grown-up sister and her husband, the blacksmith Joe Gargery (Bernard Miles), in their house on Romney Marsh. But then the film leaps forward a few years. Showing true sensitivity, Lean prepares us for the change in Pip - now a strapping young man who works as Joe's apprentice in the forge - by filming his shadow on the forge wall. The effect is even more appropriate because the suggestion of a 'doppelgänger' is suitably Dickensian and fits the emphasis on Pip's self-doubts and self-alienation that will figure at the centre of the story.

What Hitchcock does is similar. All of a sudden, we learn that Fisher isn't who we took him for. The film cuts to his shadow on the study wall at the precise moment we hear him ask Krug to leave - because Jones, in the next room, has rumbled the Van Meer business. To drive home the revelation of Fisher's perfidy, the camera next promptly swivels to his face: in effect, giving us a reaction-shot to go with his own announcement (a foretaste of the technique of **Rope**). But you could also say that the shadow represents our glimpse of the real, sinister Fisher, and that the reaction-shot is less of Fisher than of **us**, who are now, like him, 'in the know'.

'Home of the Brave, Land of the Free'

The film ends with 'The Star-Spangled Banner' on the soundtrack, and an image of the American eagle - Walter Wanger's trademark, no less - on the screen. You think forward to **North by Northwest** (1959), and what Hitchcock, Saul Bass and Bernard Herrmann did there with the up-front Metro logo. Instead of the tired, familiar shot of the roaring lion, Bass provided a stylised, white-on-green image that was truly sinister, and Herrmann began with a musical rumble that was at once a lion's growl and a leitmotiv of the soundtrack proper. In the hands of Hitchcock and his talented collaborators, as the exemplary **Foreign Correspondent** shows, almost everything could be grist to the director's mill.

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Notes

1. The stage version had starred Gerald du Maurier as Drummond. He and Hitchcock later struck up a friendship.

2. Something similar seems to have been reflected in post-War German cinema (e.g. Fritz Lang's 1922 **Dr Mabuse der Spieler**). For the psychology of boredom, see my article on **Spellbound** in 'MacGuffin' 15. For boredom as a motif in the thriller, see the present article.

3. ffolliott's name may be a dig at the poet e. e. cummings (1894--1962) who insisted on writing his name in lower-case. It may also refer to the name of a character, Robert Ffolliott, in the celebrated melodrama 'The Shaughran' (1874) by Dion Boucicault. And, for the record, the 1995 Melbourne telephone directory lists several surnames commencing with 'Ff', though not 'ff' (and there's no 'Ffolliott' **or** 'ffolliott)!

4. See interview with Charles Bennett in Pat McGilligan (ed.), 'Backstory: Interviews with Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age' (1986), p. 25. The name of Bennett's treatment for Hitchcock alludes to a passing reference at the start of the sixth Bulldog Drummond book, 'Temple Tower' (1929), where Drummond's wife is said to use his face 'only ... to amuse the baby'! Bennett may further have looked at several Bulldog Drummond films. Of these, the first and most faithful adaptation, according to William K. Everson ('The Detective in Film', 1972, p. 62) was **Bulldog Drummond** (1922), starring Carlyle Blackwell; the best of them was **Bulldog Drummond** (1929), starring Ronald Colman. Hitchcock's own film **Number Seventeen** (1932) makes fun of several Drummond-type conventions (e.g. the disappearing body).

5. Henry Lakington had perished in a bath of acid at the end of 'Bulldog Drummond'.

6. No doubt, Sapper's use of doubles as a plot-device was indebted to earlier notable instances: e.g. Anthony Hope's 'The Prisoner of Zenda' (1894). Cf, too, E. Phillips Oppenheim's 'The Great Impersonation' (1919) as drawing on that same tradition.

7. Otis Ferguson's 1940 review of **Foreign Correspondent** praises its accumulation of technical detail, 'like [that of] a Dutch painter'. Quoted in Jane E. Sloan, 'Alfred Hitchcock: a filmography and bibliography' (1995), p. 358 (item 136).

8. This figure was quoted by presenter Bill Collins when he hosted a screening of **Foreign Correspondent** on Australian TV.

9. Hugh Greene, "Introduction", 'Victorian Villainies' (1991), p. 9. According to Greene, Richard Harding Davis 'was a very arrogant man, rather like some of the American correspondents I have met in other wars, and seems to have been universally disliked by his contemporaries. But he could write.'

10. Sheean, Chapter 6.

11. Denning, p. 18.

12. Sam P. Simone, 'Hitchcock as Activist: Politics and the War Films' (1982), p. 47.

13. Quoted by Geoffrey Household, "Foreword", in Erskine Childers, 'The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service' (Penguin Books edition, 1978), p. 12.

14. Denning, p. 51, cites some remarks of Graham Greene on John Buchan in order to note how the hero in these various stories 'is an amateur spy because the adventure breaks in on everyday life, "the dismal but dignified routine of office, club, and chambers"'.

15. The title of Buchan's novel is only the most immediately obvious of the book's many references to 'The Pilgrim's Progress' (1678, 1684) by John Bunyan. (Mr Standfast's story is told at the end of the Second Part of Bunyan's book, and concerns his imminent death, 'for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from him any longer'.) Indirectly, i.e. via Buchan, Hitchcock's thrillers may be considered beholden to Bunyan, not least in their essentially picaresque structure.

16. Gresson attaches himself to Hannay, both aboard ship and ashore, exactly as Manfred attaches himself to Armstrong in Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain** (1966) ...

17. Quoted in Richard Usborne, 'Clubland Heroes' (1983), p. 24.

18. Again I owe this information to Bill Collins. Cf note 8 above.

19. Cited by Jack Adrian, "Introduction", in Dornford Yates, 'The Best of Berry' (Dent, 1989), pp. xvi-xvii.

20. For a woman's readiness to brave death, in the self-forgetfulness of love, cf my comments in 'MacGuffin' 15 on the confrontation of Constance Petersen (Ingrid Bergman) with Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll) near the end of **Spellbound**. As for Keats's poetic notions, I know of no concept that better expresses what I take to be Hitchcock's own understanding than that of 'negative capability', by which Keats meant an artist's capacity to totally empathise with his/her characters. At times, though, Keats himself drew back from what he may have seen as too 'feminine' a surrender. According to Douglas Bush, 'As artist [Keats] fluctuates - and is aware of his fluctuations - between belief in the poetic efficacy of a wise passiveness, and belief in the active pursuit of rational knowledge and philosophy' - quoted in Margaret Drabble (ed.), 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature' (1985), p. 689. This is the stuff of Hitchcock's **Vertigo** - and of Schopenhauer's pessimism. Hence, further, the **mock**-Nirvana of several Hitchcock climaxes.

21. Alfred Hitchcock, "Why thrillers thrive", 'The Picturegoer' (January 18, 1936), p. 15. Cited in Sloan, p. 353 (item 109).

22. Hitchcock's distaste for (Cartesian) logic, and its typical reductionism, was very apparent in a memorable interview he gave Oriana Fallaci in May, 1963. 'There's nothing more stupid than logic', he told her. 'Logic is the result of reasoning, reasoning is the result of experience, and who's to say whether our experiences are the right ones? My dog doesn't understand music, Bach bores him to death. Does that mean my dog is illogical? It only means that his experiences are different from Bach's. I don't attach any importance to logic. None of my films is based on logic. Give me a bomb: and Descartes can go boil his head. There's nothing like a good bomb for creating suspense.' (Oriana Fallaci, 'Limelighters', 1967, p. 93.) On the other hand, both Bach and Hitchcock's dog share in common (Schopenhauer's) 'Will', if only we could see it. Cf note 20, above, on Schopenhauer's (and Hitchcock's) pessimism. What I'm also saying, paraphrasing Hitchcock, is that there's nothing like a good **melodrama** to assault our blinkered state - for a while ...

23. Cf entry on 'Murrow, Edward Roscoe', in 'The New Illustrated Columbia Encyclopedia' (1979), Vol. 15, p. 4629. Incidentally, it's interesting to note that Johnny Jones's phrase about 'lights going out in Europe' was used at the 1940 Republican Convention ...

24. An entry on William Cameron Menzies in 'The Art of Hollywood: Fifty Years of Art Direction', a booklet accompanying an exhibition of that title arranged by Thames Television in 1979, implies the **Our Town-Foreign Correspondent** connection. See pp. 95-6.

25. Original source not identified. Quoted in Harold Wheeler (general editor) and B. Webster Smith (editor of revised edition), 'The Wonderful Story of London' (c. 1948), p. 265 (caption).

26. Note, too, that when Johnny Jones later finds a wooden cart in the windmill's garage - where he'd hoped to find the crooks' getaway car - it looks very much like one of the wooden carts we see used by the peasants in **The Bride of Frankenstein**.

27. I've taken this information from Manvell & Fraenkel, 'The German Cinema' (1971), p. 8.

28. Leslie Halliwell, 'Halliwell's Harvest' (1986), p. 59. I've not seen **Die Dreigroschenoper**, but certainly the still from that film printed in Manvell & Fraenkel, op. cit., showing a heavily-timbered staircase in a mill or warehouse, bears out Halliwell's claim. Incidentally, another noteworthy ingredient in **Foreign Correspondent**'s windmill scene, besides the visual matters so well described by Halliwell, is Alfred Newman's music: e.g. its use of sensuous harp-notes to accompany the sunlight passages, and harsh muted-brass at moments of danger.

29. Siodmak's engrossing film has a scene set in the Judge's office where he questions a murder suspect, a friend of his son. At one point, the Judge leans forward, allowing the light from the interrogation-lamp to fall on him, too. The symbolism here - the Judge unconsciously fears that his son may be the real culprit, thereby implicating the Judge himself - prefigures a similar symbolic moment in Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jorden** (1949), which Hitchcock then copied in **Strangers on a Train** (1951). See 'MacGuffin' 11, p. 8.

30. 'Halliwell's Harvest', p. 58. Of course, photographically, the dead man's bloodied face was probably

based on photographs in textbooks of forensic medicine - something I realised one day when I was browsing in the Law Library at Monash University!

31. Interview with Hitchcock, in Towers & Mitchell, 'The March of the Movies' (c. 1947), p. 34.

32. Spectacular train crashes and similar disasters had a long tradition in the nineteenth-century novel, stage melodrama, and the silent film ...

33. Charles Chaplin, 'My Autobiography' (1966), pp. 134-5. Chaplin's film **Monsieur Verdoux** (1947) has its prostitute character read Schopenhauer - she finds him just 'so-so' - in what I take to be a mark of the film's (half-serious) 'it's all one' philosophy ...

34. Chaplin himself professed to be a Jewish atheist - and in 1922 had become very excited about wanting to play Jesus of Nazareth in a film ('I look the part'). This anecdote is told in Colleen Moore's autobiography, 'Silent Star', and recounted in Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion'.

35. Donald Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 234.

36. Quoted in the BBC-TV programme, 'Goebbels, Master of Propaganda', shown in Australia in 1993.

37. In Truffaut's 'Hitchcock', Hitchcock speculates that Goebbels had obtained a print of the film through neutral Switzerland.

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ODD SPOT: CAMERAS SHOOT PEOPLE, DON'T THEY?

The idea of an assassin's gun concealed in a camera was apparently an original one when in 1940 Hitchcock's **Foreign Correspondent** used it as the basis of a memorable scene set on the rain-swept steps of the Amsterdam town hall.

Too good an idea not to imitate, in fact. The 1941 Marx Brothers film **The Big Store** hasn't one, but two, assassins in raincoats - one of whom tries to rub out hero Tony Martin with a gun hidden in a camera. He doesn't succeed, though.

Real life did it better. That same year, German intriguers were active in Iran (until British and Russian troops occupied the country in August). In Iran's capital, Tehran, an official was assassinated, the killer using precisely the method 'pioneered' in Hitchcock's film ...

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'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. For support, we thank both Richard Booth's Bookshop and the Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales. This issue printed by TS Press, Collingood, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 17 | November 1995 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5 £3

EDITORIAL

This time, my biggest 'thank you' must go to reader Jay Giswein in Highland Park, Los Angeles, who has sent along a copy of Janet Leigh's new book, '**Psycho**: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Thriller' - personally autographed and inscribed by Ms Leigh herself. The inscription (let me share it with you) reads: 'To Ken Mogg, Good luck with "The MacGuffin". Janet Leigh.' So, wow! And, of course, thank you to Ms Leigh!

Now, I can tell you that 'The MacGuffin' hopes to feature **Psycho** in either our next issue or the one after, and will review Ms Leigh's book there. Also coming soon is another of our 'sources' articles, this time on **Rear Window**. If you were agreeably surprised by the number and variety of sources we came up with for **Vertigo** ('MacGuffin' 11) and **Foreign Correspondent** ('MacGuffin' 16), you won't want to miss the **Rear Window** issue. Meanwhile, spare a thought for Hollywood independent producer, Dr Steve Sohmer, once head of Columbia Pictures. A part-time literary scholar, he recently 'discovered' one more possible source for Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' (1601) - and was so excited that he promptly began a massive publicity campaign for his find by publishing it on the Internet, at the same time asking his solicitors to send a warning to a rival scholar and former friend, forbidding her to discuss the play in public! At last report, this not-so-happy pair and their lawyers had reached an agreement that would permit both of them to publish their theories about 'Hamlet' independently.

Well, this 'MacGuffin' has its own find to present, though it's not about 'Hamlet'. It's about **Vertigo** again, and it concerns how the major source for 'D'Entre les Morts', on which **Vertigo** was based, was almost certainly the Georges Simenon novel, 'Lettre à Mon Juge' (1947). I use that novel here to test how far Professor Leland Poague's description of **Vertigo** as a veiled 'comedy of remarriage' stands up - if at all. And here's a point of clarification for what I say in my article. In 'MacGuffin' 10, Adrian Martin 'tried out' (as he put it) various 'generic descriptions' of Hitchcock's **Notorious**, one of which was indeed a combination of Hollywood remarriage comedy (a genre often featuring Cary Grant or James Stewart) and the tragic 'melodrama of an unknown woman' (in which Ingrid Bergman had already appeared: viz, Cukor's **Gaslight**). But what I find significantly different about Martin's and Poague's respective approaches is that Martin sees **Notorious** as capable of sustaining **many** different generic descriptions, whereas I think Poague tries to impose a too artificial, **single** main reading on **Vertigo**.

Next, we were speaking of the Internet ... I thank Australian reader Tim Costello for being the first to send me details of what information about Hitchcock is available on-line. Checking it out, I found an interesting item among the otherwise routine credits for **The 39 Steps**: namely, that the film's composer was Hubert Bath. Normally, the sole musical credit for many Gaumont films of the period, including **The 39 Steps**, is given to Louis Levy as 'Musical Director'. You can find that particular Internet entry, compiled by one Colin Needham, at cn@hplb.hpl.hp.com. But now there's more! Someone has started an Alfred Hitchcock Home Page on the Web. It's said to be excellent (further reports welcome) and even includes 'a cheesy little animation of the shower scene from **Psycho**'. Look it up at http://www.primenet.com/~mwc/index.html.

I haven't space to thank in detail all the other good people who've forwarded information lately. Nonetheless, especial thanks to John Trause (e.g. for a copy of the MoMA monograph, 'Junction and Journey: Trains and Film', 1991); Leslie Shepard (for several letters, including the information that 'the shoot-out in the 1934 **The Man Who Knew Too Much** has shots that are carbon copies of grouping and action from Lang's **Dr Mabuse - Inferno**' of 1922); old friend Mike Campi (again for several letters, one of which described the marvellous theatre-organ accompaniment provided at this year's Hong Kong Film

Festival for the screening of the 1931 Chinese film, **Love and Duty**, recently found in Uruguay); and 'Sight and Sound' and 'Film Comment' writer Philip Kemp (whose "Hitching Posts" will be in our next issue). Philip spotted the reference in 'MacGuffin' 14 to the influence of Sidney Gilliat's **London Belongs to Me** (1948) on **Frenzy**, and commented: '**London Belongs to Me** seems to be a much-imitated movie. The initial appearance of Alec Guiness's Professor Marcus in **The Ladykillers** [Alexander Mackendrick, 1955] looks very like a parody of the arrival of Mr Squales (Alistair Sim) in Gilliat's film - especially since Sim was Mackendrick's original choice to play the Professor.' (Yes, but as I promptly wrote back to Philip, the arrival of Mr Squales was itself an echo of the arrival of the Ivor Novello character at the door of number 13 in Hitchcock's 1926 **The Lodger**!)

Just yesterday I got another long letter from John Kuhns of Woodland Hills, California. Very pleasant it was, too, though John properly took me to task at one point for several times in these pages getting the title wrong of Hitchcock's (as opposed to Conrad's) **Secret Agent** - there's no definite article. A major piece of news in the letter concerns a coming Hitchcock Conference to be held next March in Austin, Texas. The organiser is a Professor Garrett. I'll try to print more news of this event in our next issue, due in February.

Another conference mentioned in this 'MacGuffin' is one held last August by the Australian Screen Directors' Association. Tina Kaufman was there, and in her 'Oz-report' she tells us about what Peter Weir and others said to the conference delegates. A book-review in this issue, of Robert J. Corber's excellent 'In the Name of National Security', and a special article on the famous Major Armstrong murder case in Wales, both link up with the discussion of **Vertigo** I've already referred to. (I trust readers will forgive any slight indulgence on my part where I've included material in these two pieces that I felt was relevant to the larger theme ...)

That's about it from me for now. Oh yes, contrary to what was foreshadowed last time, there's no 'MacGuffin' overseas-price rise. (We simply swapped banks, to one with more reasonable charges for handling 'foreign' drafts!)

To everyone, good viewing.

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LETTERS

Ronald Conway, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia

Your range of references for **Foreign Correspondent** [in 'MacGuffin' 16] reminds me of the decidedly **useful** uses of obsession. I could not imagine any writer in the world doing a more detailed job on it. ... However, the footnote on the wooden cart in the windmill garage seemed to be one of [a few times] where you push the minutiae a bit too far. Also, I'm not **entirely** convinced that Frollo's final dispatch from Notre Dame in **The Hunchback ...** is connected with Rowley's fall from Westminster [Cathedral] tower. But these are quibbles about quibbles and don't detract from the fine, meticulous job you have done on the film.

(Editor's note. Thanks, Ron. Easy to see from your note on obsession that the professional psychologist never forgets his trade! And, yes, I plead guilty as charged! Now, if anyone wants some further reading on **Foreign Correspondent**, with plenty of production detail, I see that there's an article about that film in 'American Cinematographer', August 1995, pp. 75-81.)

* * *

'Huntley Haverstock', [reincarnated at?] Rhode Island, USA

'The MacGuffin' may appear innocuous to some but I confess that I perceive something more sinister behind

its rather ordinary facade. Indeed, I harbour a suspicion that reading 'The MacGuffin' could be quite hazardous to the young and innocent due to its ability to induce an addiction which causes one to repeatedly attempt to decipher beyond a shadow of a doubt all of the insights of its notorious artists, particularly those who reside under Capricorn ... Such an obsession, particularly if it propels one in a northwesterly direction towards the ghastly crystal trench, could have fatal consequences.

(Editor's note. What, more obsession?! But about 'The Crystal Trench' now. Hitchcock filmed that particular story by A.E.W. Mason ('The Four Feathers') for an episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents', didn't he? I've not seen it, but have heard that it ends with an unfaithful husband being killed when he falls down inside a glacier, where his body remains in full view for ever afterwards! Did you know that that incident is reprised in Chapter 12 of 'The Third Round', 1925, by 'Sapper', though the accident-victim there is a local celebrity? The story's hero, Bulldog Drummond, muses: 'A terrible position for a self-respecting community, don't you think? To have the leading citizen in full view in a block of ice gives visitors an impression of carelessness.')

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Angel Baby, you did it!

Winner in all the main categories, including Best Film, at this year's Australian Film Institute Awards was first-time director Michael Rymer's **Angel Baby**, about a pair of young schizophrenics in Melbourne.

Rymer's film thus joined previous Best Film award-winners, including **Muriel's Wedding** (d. Paul Hogan, in 1994), **The Piano** (Jane Campion, 1993), **Strictly Ballroom** (Baz Luhrmann, 1992), **Proof** (Jocelyn Moorhouse, 1991), and **Flirting** (John Duigan, 1990).

Oz films in the US

Meanwhile, Australian film has had a boost overseas with the mounting of a special season - currently running - at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The season is called 'Strictly Oz: A History of Australian Film', and it continues until next January 16. After that, it will go on to the University of California, for screening in February. The curator and co-ordinator of film exhibitions at MoMA, Larry Kardish, commented perceptively: 'There's a nice, healthy cynicism running through Australian film, and I wanted to illustrate that.'

The season follows hard upon an earlier, relatively minor, one, consisting of films made in Melbourne (e.g. **Proof**, **Romper Stomper**), and screened last July at the New York Guggenheim Museum's small branch in downtown Soho.

More plans to film Conrad's 'The Secret Agent'

We've announced this before, but now it looks like at least one new film version of Joseph Conrad's 1907 novel (and 1921 play) is going ahead. It was previously filmed in 1936 by Hitchcock, as **Sabotage**.

Other Conrad adaptations looming are a BBC-TV/Italian RAI Network mini-series version of 'Nostromo' (published in 1904) - variously announced as being in four parts or of six hours' duration - and a film of 'Victory' (published in 1915). The simultaneous adaptation of several Jane Austen novels for either TV or film ('Pride and Prejudice', 'Sense and Sensibility', 'Persuasion', 'Emma') has prompted at least one commentator to suggest that these two authors have very dry, even bleak, views of human nature, and that this suits our pre-milennial bile!

It's certainly true that Conrad had a 'pessimistic' view of people. He was an admirer of Schopenhauer's philosophy, and supposedly the hero Heyst's 'clear-sighted' father in 'Victory' was based on that German thinker.

Other literary adaptations announced as coming soon may, or may not, fit the same pattern. They include Henry James's 'Portrait of a Lady', Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Scarlet Letter', Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Kidnapped', and Rudyard Kipling's 'Captains Courageous'.

Not quite in the spirit of Norman Bates

Australia has its very own Norman Bates Society, whose serious purpose is to research and hold public meetings about true crime. The society recently brought to Australia retired FBI special agent Robert Ressler, who was technical advisor for the book and film of **Silence of the Lambs**. For information about future activities of the society, write to P.O. Box 385, Petersham, NSW 2049, Australia. Phone/Fax: 61 2 3104454.

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OZ-REPORT

A Conference of passion and commitment

The annual conference held by the Australian Screen Directors' Association is a highlight of the film community calendar for me, as it's always adventurously programmed and well-attended. Invariably, the audience of film and TV directors, writers, producers, actors, film teachers and students, and industry bureaucrats, become very involved and passionate about the proceedings. This year's event commenced with a stimulating opening address from Peter Weir, proceeded through structured sessions and panel discussions on relevant issues designed to provide variety and choice, and culminated in a warm and heartfelt tribute dinner. Altogether, the conference was as lively and thoroughly engaging as ever.

Held at the National Film School, Sydney, during two packed days in August, it's an event that asks the over 200 attendees to sacrifice luxury for content. For lunch one grabs fresh and plentiful sandwiches, fruit from large baskets, and fruit juice, and goes outside to the spreading lawns or courtyard seats, thus earning more time for discussion and catching up with old friends. Morning and afternoon tea breaks mean queuing around the tea and coffee urns, grabbing a cup and a biscuit or two, and mingling and chatting on the move.

The theme of the conference was 'The director's voice: craft, creativity, and power', and an exhilarating opening address from the normally reclusive Peter Weir set the scene. He began with a lighthearted description of both his inability to say 'Cut!' on the set, and his innovative attempts to deal with this problem. Then he took us on a gently anecdotal stroll through his career, making some cogent points about the conference's main theme on the way. Asked about his timeframe on filmmaking, he replied that he always thought of the film he was making as his last, and as films take a lot of his energy, he usually takes a year off between them. 'I've always lived here [in Australia] ... and I cut down on the newspapers, live close to nature, do a lot of reading. I'd like to make more films, but ...'

'As long as the idea is powerful, the casting is right, and the actors are comfortable with the script, I can try and keep the idea of filmmaking as a unique experience, keep my love of filmmaking by providing an atmosphere with a lot of humour, a spirit of unpredictability. Humour is good, it's some sort of Zen thing - like the Dalai Lama, who always has that smile.' On that note ended a session that thoroughly delighted its audience.

An issue that came up time and again over the two days, and was obviously of considerable concern to many of those present, was the diminishing role of the director in TV drama. Several sessions were devoted to just that issue. Series television was described as the most onerous and least rewarding area of work for a drama director, as, with tight budgets and schedules, the director is now brought on to the project very late in the piece, and is often reduced to merely 'shooting the schedule'. Meanwhile, actors, writers, and even script editors can also influence the direction of the work. One frustrated conference

participant asked whether the director's voice could even be heard in this climate of drastically reduced directorial control, while another described the ideal: the director being brought on to the project early, having more access to the writer and being involved in the final draft, having more involvement in casting, and being allowed to produce a proper director's-cut.

Discussions exposed much dissatisfaction with current practice by the commercial TV networks, in particular the provision of a list of acceptable cast members, the distribution of a draft of the script superseding the 'final draft' the director had agreed to, and, in the most recent occurrence, the requesting of an additional two minutes in the 'final cut', which would allow the network to cut any two minutes it wanted. The conference's concern on this issue resulted in a strong recommendation at the wrap-up session which the Directors' Association was to take into forthcoming contract negotiations with the producers' peak body.

One director, with the national broadcaster for many years and now a freelancer, voiced many people's concerns when he described TV drama as an industry, 'raw material in one end and product out the other'. But then he talked about the great respect he has for his craft and for the crews with whom he works: 'I love walking onto the set, I love the soundstage, despite the pace at which we, as TV directors, now work. The achievement and knowledge of craft is something I have great pride in.'

He added that these days 'the director's voice is very muted out there in TV ... I'd be very cautious advising anyone to go into TV - you have very little opportunity to make your mark. But just occasionally the magic happens.'

The other major issue to be addressed in several sessions at the conference was the blurring of the lines between documentary and drama, and the changing shape of documentary itself, and one session looked at the ways in which documentary makers choose to represent 'truth' and 'reality'. Lastly, in the session before the conference wrap-up, directors from different production areas were asked to talk about survival and empowerment.

The special conference dinner celebrated the centenary of cinema, and saw the presenting of the inaugural 'Cecil Holmes Award'. Tributes from friends and colleagues combined with a wonderful archival presentation to commemorate the work of Cecil Holmes, the pioneer director who died last year, and the first award-recipient, director-turned-producer Richard Mason, who got his first job in the wardrobe department of **Eureka Stockade** (1947), worked in England and Australia in both those countries' national filmmaking organisations and as an independent, and has been influential in shaping the Australian film industry by his enthusiastic involvement in many events and industry bodies over the last 30 years. He is probably best known outside the industry for the four films he produced for John Duigan, including **Winter of Our Dreams** (1981) and **Far East** (1982).

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BLOOPERS

The biggest blooper this time consists in my again not leaving enough room to put right all the previous bloopers! Nor is there yet enough space to run a page of footnotes left over from the **Spellbound** article in 'MacGuffin' 15 - nor to print a Table of Contents for issues 13-16. (In the unlikely event that anyone wants either of those items in a hurry, please write and request a copy.) But, speaking of the **Spellbound** issue ... I'm aware that, towards the end, there's some loose use of the two terms 'noumenal' and 'numinous' as if they were interchangeable. More on that next time. The hermit scene mentioned on p. 21 as being in **Frankenstein** is actually in **The Bride of Frankenstein**, of course. And, lastly, a note to John Kuhns re **Elstree Calling** (1930), mentioned in 'Letters' of the same issue. A definitive note on Hitchcock's participation in that film is included in a 'Monthly Film Bulletin' analysis, in the November 1975 issue, pp. 246-47 ...

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BOOK REVIEW

Corber, Robert J.: 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 1993; 262 pp, pb)

While [Ernesto] Laclau agrees that no one is unaffected by the structure of social relations - to the point indeed where we are partially determined by them - at the same time no identity is entirely determined; a space of autonomy exists, albeit one constituted through dislocation.

- John Lechte[1]

Under the postwar settlement, Americans inhabited a set of discursive structures in which they experienced as subjective relations that were in reality political and social. That is to say, they experienced their lived relations to the world as originating in themselves rather than in specific political and social conditions. Thus [Norman] Mailer felt that the only way in which Americans would give up their faith in consensus politics was if they experienced a violent shock to their subjectivity, so deeply rooted was that faith in their identities as Americans.

- Robert Corber[2]

Professor Corber's working perspective for this book is derived from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's notion of the 'impossibility of society' - the notion that 'society' is no more than a prevailing hegemony of some social antagonisms over others -[3] and it serves him very nicely, thank you. He shows clearly how Hitchcock's films would seem to go along with, even reinforce, current social attitudes and prejudices but would also subtly call them into question. For example, **Strangers on a Train** (1951) was timely because it dealt with the then-perceived threat to the fabric of American society and of 'the national security state' posed by Communists and homosexuals; but it also ('unintentionally', Corber thinks) 'acknowledged the homoerotics of male spectatorial pleasure'[4] and, by making the homosexual Bruno Anthony the most charismatic character, ended up constituting a 'heterosexual paranoid fantas[y] about the instability of the sex-gender system'.[5]

Typical, too, of Corber's historicist approach is what he makes of the Muir Woods scene in **Vertigo** (1958) in which Madeleine/Judy (Kim Novak), pretending to be possessed by her ancestor Carlotta Valdez, points to the outer rings of a felled tree, and says, 'Somewhere here I was born, and there I died. It was only a moment for you, you took no notice.' Here's Corber's comment:

> At first sight, Madeleine merely seems to be acknowledging that in comparison to the tree ... Carlotta's life was short and insignificant. Yet in the context of the dates marked on the tree, she also seems to be calling attention to Carlotta's exclusion from the history they narrativise: there is apparently no place in official representations of the nation's past for the story of a Hispanic woman who was seduced and abandoned by her Anglo lover in the nineteenth century.[6]

That Carlotta's story is indeed meant by the filmmakers to epitomise a forgotten, and regrettable, incident from 'the small-stuff of history' (in Scottie's phrase) is quite evident, I think. What's refreshing about Corber's discussion of the film is the knowledgeable way in which he spots details like that one and gives them an historical context - not forgetting that the film itself is part of such a context. (Corber, as we'll see, wants to show that Scottie is guilty of perpetuating the same arrogant myth of male supremacy as Carlotta's lover displayed, and he explains it in precise psycho-historical terms: Scottie, a product of postwar America with its 'consensus politics', is desperate to recover his previous respectability, i.e. to show that he's still a virile heterosexual, no bum or beatnik.)

Mind you, Corber is yet another academic who on viewing this scene simply cannot bring himself to acknowledge that Madeleine/Judy here apostrophises 'God' - I think he believes Madeleine is talking to the trees! In effect, and ironically, he criticises a lack of pluralism in Scottie (James Stewart) yet is guilty of the same thing himself: after all, belief-systems do have a degree of reality give **or** take their historical context. Corber evidently sees his position as a matter of integrity. At one point, he notes 'the similarity between Laclau and Mouffe's theory of the impossibility of society and Jacques Lacan's concept of the Real, that which is excluded from the Symbolic, excluded from the network of

signifiers which build up the reality of the world, and which is hence (we're told)[7] impossible to know. But Corber insists 'that when I refer to the impossibility of fixing the social in a sutured totality, I have in mind the subject's construction across a multiplicity of contradictory discourses, and not the Lacanian Real'.[8]

Well, fair enough, but what if the **filmmakers** had in mind a different opposition again between the knowable and the unknowable? After all, Lacan's distinction between the (knowable) Symbolic and the (unknowable) Real bears its own similarity to Kant's distinction between the (knowable) phenomenal world and the (unknowable) noumenal realm, the thing-in-itself. Moreover, it was the latter distinction which Schopenhauer adopted when he coined the notions of (multitudinous) Representation and (a single) Will - and which has long seemed to me to resemble Hitchcock's own world-view. I'm suggesting that Corber's one-track historicist perspective may at times take him straight to the heart of an issue raised by a film - yet at other times cause him to commit some blatant solecism.

Thus in general his analysis of **Vertigo** is sensible, and adds appreciably to our sum of knowledge about that film. (First, though, he has done his homework, and has dutifully read and assimilated what most of **Vertigo**'s major critics have said about it.) Perhaps only once did I feel that he was quite wrong, and it was precisely an occasion when his historicist method was dictating to him. I'm thinking of his description of the moment in the opening scene when Scottie looks down and finds out he has acrophobia (vertigo), about which Corber tells us: 'Scottie's sudden loss of perspective ... is so traumatic because he discovers that what he simultaneously desires and fears is not so much falling to his death as relinquishing his duties as an officer of the law.'[9] Which of course is nonsense! What Scottie at that moment both desires and fears (cf Keats's notion of being 'half in love with easeful death') is getting killed. Nothing else!

That's to say, the phenomenon itself is that simple. I think everyone has felt it (including the thought, 'All I'd have to do is let go'). I once wrote of this scene that 'fear of heights is something innate in us all, and absolute - in the sense that it isn't culturally determined'.[10] Thus the scene approximates what Hitchcock called 'an effect of pure film'. (Cf Schopenhauer on music: 'pure Will'.) Unfortunately Corber has just said that Scottie and Gavin Elster represent 'the postwar rebellion against middle-class conformity', and so he finds himself stuck with the over-interpretation above. He implies that Scottie on the spur of the moment decides he'd like to quit his job and become a beatnik - but that simultaneously he (Scottie) feels guilty for having such an 'unmasculine' thought. Also, he (Scottie) could be feeling just a little bit worried about being killed, though clearly Corber thinks that's a secondary matter!

Quite seriously now, what is Corber driving at? Well, in the first place he's making the point that San Francisco in the late 1950s was the centre of the Beat movement, and that no part of the city was more central to that movement than the North Beach area where in the film Scottie lives near Coit Tower.[11] Moreover, though the film never refers to the Beats, it does pivot on Carlotta Valdez's story which is set in a **previous** 'Bohemian' era of San Francisco history. (The film specifically mentions, in Midge's words, 'the gay old Bohemian days of gay old San Francisco'.) Thus it seems that history may be about to repeat itself - and in the harsh treatment of Madeleine/Judy by Gavin and then Scottie the film certainly has a plot to match.

Corber gives a lot more detail about the Beat movement, detail which often proves directly pertinent to the film. I'll come to some of it. But first, let's notice the picture that Corber has (unintentionally?!) painted for us. Neither Gavin nor Scottie is an authentic beatnik, of course. For instance, each is middle-aged and outwardly 'respectable'. So, to the extent that they engage in 'beatnik-type' actions, their particular search for 'colour, excitement, power, freedom' offers the audience both more and less (or other: e.g. in the matter of 'power') than it might expect - but always with plenty for it to think about. Hitchcock had been using such a ploy for decades. I was reminded of how, during the climax of **Blackmail** (1929), he'd placed his essentially drab characters in a spectacular setting featuring in particular the Egyptian Room at the British Museum. For audiences of the time, that setting gave an instant reminder of stories then circulating in popular magazines and the Sunday papers about pharaohs' curses and the like. (One of the Museum's mummies was said to have a tortured expression, and in 1920 a seance had been held to end its misery. But for decades afterwards, Museum attendants reported being asked by visitors to show them the 'mummy with the curse'.)[12]

So I have no problem with accepting Corber's introduction of the Beat movement into his discussion of **Vertigo**. Indeed, I fancy that Hitchcock, sniffing the air, may have sensed more of that movement's nuances than Corber describes: for instance, its receptivity to Eastern thought. I also think that you can draw a parallel, which in fact Corber implies, between the film's first-half indulgence of Scottie and his fantasies and a similar degree of indulgence/sympathy which **Strangers on a Train** extends in its first half and beyond to Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker). By the same token, Hitchcock's films of the 1950s reflected the existence in their audiences of a strong unconscious drive towards social conformity.[13] Thus crucial to Corber's historicist analysis is this sentence from his book's Introduction:

> The emergence of the national security state virtually insured that Americans scrutinised themselves for any indication of sexual and/or political deviance that might call into question their loyalty to the nation.[14]

Scottie in **Vertigo** indeed questions himself that way quite early in the film ('Midge, do you suppose many men wear corsets?' - with all that that implies). And in **Strangers on a Train** the rather less astute Guy (Farley Granger), who is Bruno's alter ego, does likewise - though it takes him perhaps the entire film to manage it (the scene with the clergyman at the end). All of this is inserted by Hitchcock into some sort of Oedipal trajectory for the hero, about which Corber manages to offer some fresh insights. But as he himself indicates, and Raymond Durgnat's 1974 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (not cited by Corber) had already pointed out, the resultant pattern of eddying narrative currents had long been a Hitchcock speciality. Also, Hitchcock's characters' need for self-scrutiny can be found at least as early as **Blackmail**, where its emblem is the pointing jester.

Now, the reason that Corber makes his strange claim that Scottie on the rooftop suddenly feels job-dissatisfaction (!) is connected with the fact that a popular perception of the Beats was that they were social drop-outs (and, Bernard Wolfe insisted, homosexuals).[15] Here again I feel Corber is perhaps being too single-minded in his interpretative zeal. These things **are** a part of Scottie's make-up, at some level, but so too are less culturally-specific things like a general world-weariness (implied when Scottie later tells Judy that 'these are the first happy days I've known in years'). In turn, I could wish that Corber had been able to see the films in a broader, Schopenhauerian (or Kantian) perspective. True, at times he does sound a little like Schopenhauer, as when he remarks of **Vertigo** that it forces the spectator to see 'that social reality is not only an effect of representation but also its excess, or what remains uncontained by representation and that can destabilise or rupture it'.[16] But Corber's use of the word 'representation' is strictly that of Laclau and Mouffe. It doesn't carry the fuller determinism of Schopenhauer whereby Will is constantly frustrating all our subjectively-conceived plans and hopes, a determinism which I think informs **Vertigo** - if only as one more nod by Hitchcock to Eastern thought. (Could the Chinese symbol for 'double happiness' in the railing outside Scottie's front door be signalling the quest that motivates people everywhere, in both East and West, and which proves so deceptive?) I notice that a recent review of a book of selected letters by Jack Kerouac (1923-1969), the man who named and epitomised the Beat generation, concludes on this observation about its subject's growing world-weariness (after about 1954):

> The evaporation of optimism, his growing realisation of the Buddhist truth that all life is suffering, and his eventual failure to transcend it, was Jack Kerouac's tragedy.[17]

Mind you, I think **Vertigo** is ultimately about the life-force itself, in both its creative and destructive aspects. (That's precisely why Schopenhauer is more deterministic-pessimistic than Laclau and Mouffe. Will is in everything, and **no** absolute 'space of autonomy' exists.)[18] Analysing **Spellbound** (1945) in 'MacGuffin' 15, I tried to show how strongly such a concept of Will runs through Hitchcock's films, extending even to the spectator's 'libidinal' investment in them. Echoing Schopenhauer, I spoke of how only 'detachment' might offer a form of liberation - yet of how that's the hardest thing to achieve, and how not even the character Dr Brulov (Michael Chekov) is up to it. Well, Corber concludes his **Vertigo** chapter with a discussion of the cinematic apparatus itself. The lesson he draws is almost pure Schopenhauer:

> Because of the spectator's libidinal investment in the filmic text, s/he does not question its construction of social reality.[19]

In other words, without detachment the spectator cannot see her/his true situation, and how it operates. Someone else who sensed the truth of that in the 1950s was surely the great American film critic, Robert Warshow, whom Corber cites in Chapter 1 as being one of the 'liberals' whose world-view Hitchcock's films both approximated and critiqued. On separate occasions, Warshow criticised both fellow-liberal Lionel Trilling and film director Leo McCarey for lacking the 'compassionate detachment' needed to realistically depict aspects of American life.[20] In contrast, I'd say that Hitchcock's **Vertigo** is very specific about the importance of compassion and detachment (vide the characters of Midge and the nun), even as it ambivalently correlates these things with dying to the world ...

I learnt a great deal from reading Corber's excellent book, which contains keen insights into **Rear Window**, **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (both versions), **North by Northwest**, and **Psycho** besides the films I've chosen to discuss above. It does have some repetitiveness and occasional slips (like the name of the composer of 'The Storm Cloud Cantata' in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** - not in fact William Walton but the Australian Arthur Benjamin), yet these are not grave faults. Overall, the writing is lucid and painstaking, the tone that of someone who knows his American history and his Hitchcock movies, and who believes in the importance of the points he makes.

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Notes

1. J. Lechte, 'fifty key contemporary thinkers: from structuralism to postmodernity' (1994), p. 191.

2. R. Corber, 'In the Name of National Security' (1993), p. 171.

3. Ibid, p. 229n.

4. Ibid, p. 14.

5. Ibid, p. 239n.

6. Ibid, p. 154.

7. See entry on "real" in Alan Bullock, et al. (eds), 'The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought' (1988), p. 724.

8. Corber, p. 229n.

9. Ibid, p. 173.

10. Ken Mogg, (review of) 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' by Robert E. Kapsis, in 'Hitchcock Annual' (1993 edition), p. 111.

11. Corber, p. 158.

12. "Curse of the Pharaohs", in Richard Cavendish (ed.), 'Man, Myth, and Magic', no. 21 (c. 1970), back cover.

13. Cf passage from Corber's book, referring to Norman Mailer, at the head of the present article. Mailer's point, about how it seemed to him that Americans needed 'a violent shock to their subjectivity' (as Corber puts it), strikes me as being very pertinent to some Hitchcock films of the period, and especially **The Wrong Man** (1957) ...

14. Corber, p. 14.

15. Ibid, pp. 161-62.

16. Ibid, p. 183.

17. Mick Brown, (review of) 'Jack Kerouac: Selected Letters 1940-1956' edited by Ann Charters, in 'The Weekend Australian', October 14-15, 1995.

18. Cf passage from John Lechte's 'fifty key contemporary thinkers' quoted at the head of the present article. Schopenhauer's position on determinism versus free will is set out most definitively in his long essay, "On the Freedom of the Will". The deft translation by E.F.J. Payne (1985) makes an excellent introduction to Schopenhauer's thought. Like nearly everything by the great German philosopher, it's beautifully written. A representative passage: 'Our acts are indeed not a first beginning; therefore nothing really new comes through them into being. But this is true: **through that which we do we only find out what we are.**' (p. 62)

19. Corber, p. 184.

20. Ibid, pp. 45-48. The phrase 'compassionate detachment' is first quoted on p. 47.

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Murder in a Small Town

The town in question is Hay-on-Wye in Wales, and the murder, a particularly famous one, is that of Mrs Katherine Armstrong by her husband, Major Herbert Armstrong. It took place on February 22, 1921, and there are Hitchcock connections, as we'll see ...

But our story really begins a year-and-a-half earlier, and some kilometres further west, in the town of Kidwelly. There, on the night of June 16, 1919, a Mrs Greenwood died in agony. Her unsuspecting doctor certified the cause of death as a faulty heart. Yet not all the locals were happy with that finding. When, just four months later, the middle-aged Harold Greenwood married again, and to a noticeably younger woman, there was so much gossip that it forced the police to request that Mrs Greenwood's remains be exhumed. These were found to be well-preserved and to contain arsenic. Harold Greenwood was charged with murder.

At his trial, which began on November 2, 1920, he pleaded not guilty. He was defended by the brilliant Sir Edward Marshall Hall - who was the model for the advocate Sir Malcolm Keane in the Robert Hichens novel, 'The Paradine Case' (1933), filmed in 1947 by Hitchcock (see 'MacGuffin' 12). Testimony was given that Greenwood put arsenic in a bottle of burgundy (another detail used in 'The Paradine Case'), and that Mrs Greenwood had drunk some of the burgundy at lunch on the day before she died. But Hall managed to cast doubt on this crucial piece of evidence, and he suggested that the doctor had accidentally poisoned Mrs Greenwood himself. Greenwood was acquitted.

So now our scene moves to sleepy Hay-on-Wye, just inside the Wales-England border. In 1920, everyone must have thought that the town's best days all lay behind it. Originally the site of a Norman fortification against the invading Romans, it had been given one moment of glory when, in 1400, the English were forcibly expelled from Hay Castle by local hero Owain Glyndwr, who then claimed both town and castle in the name of Welsh independence.

Now, like Harold Greenwood, Major Herbert Rowse Armstrong was a solicitor. The Armstrongs had lived at Hay since their marriage in 1907, and they'd had three children. Unfortunately Mrs Armstrong had become a hypochondriac and a nagger, and she stood a good six inches taller than her diminutive (seven-stone) husband. She was also a stickler for things like teetotalism and punctuality. She thought nothing of loudly summoning the Major away from the tennis court where he'd been in the middle of a doubles game. 'Come, Herbert!' her voice would boom out. 'It's six o'clock - how can you expect the servants to be punctual if the master is late for dinner?' Once, she broke up his game by reminding him that this was his 'bath night'.

In July of 1920 - just a month after Harold Greenwood in Kidwelly was charged with poisoning his wife - Major Armstrong saw fit to persuade Mrs Armstrong to make a new will. She owned some property, which had been willed in part to her children, and in part to her husband. The new will was rather irregularly witnessed. Yet it left all the property to the Major.

A month later, the Major went out and bought three cans of weed-killer. It seems that during that summer the dandelions in his lawn were proving particularly troublesome. Still, he'd show them! The only problem was that Mrs Armstrong soon wasn't feeling up to appreciating the lawn's improvement, having herself taken sick. Indeed, after falling quite severely ill, she was certified as suffering from delusions, and her doctors thought it best to send her to a private asylum. That was a good move in the short-term, for the lady made a quick recovery, both in body and mind.

Mrs Armstrong returned home in January, 1921. But just before she came back, her husband did something strange. Though it was midwinter, and no dandelions were sprouting, he bought half a pound of pure arsenic. Immediately, Mrs Armstrong's health suffered a relapse. And on February 22, she died. The cause of death was given as gastritis. Freed of his nagging wife, the Major went on a long recuperative holiday, which was notable for his philandering with a married woman he'd known since the War.

What finally caused his undoing, though, and helps make his case a true classic, was how he now proceeded to overreach himself. I've called Hay-on-Wye a small town, and even a recent census figure gives its population as just 1,293. Yet in 1921 the Major wasn't the town's only practising solicitor. Across the street from his office was that of a rival firm, whose head was Mr Oswald Norman Martin. Following a dispute between the two firms over a professional matter, Mr Martin one day received in the mail a box of chocolates from an anonymous donor. Mr Martin himself did not eat any of the chocolates, but a dinner-guest accepted some, and was soon taken violently ill.

On October 26, Mr Martin actually went to the Major's house for tea; the host handed him a buttered scone with the ostentatious remark, 'Excuse fingers'. And, yes, within a few hours, Mr Martin was severely sick. But his doctor was the same one who had attended the dying Mrs Armstrong, and something made the medical gentleman suspicious. He ordered tests, which showed that Martin had been poisoned with arsenic. Now it was only a matter of time before Armstrong was arrested and Mrs Armstrong's body exhumed. When the body proved to contain poison, the Major was formally charged with his wife's murder. His trial began on April 3, 1922, and it lasted ten days. At the end of it, he was found guilty. He was subsequently hanged at Gloucester Prison on May 21 of that year.

* * *

Those are the facts, and I've said that there are Hitchcock connections. Probably the most obvious connection concerns the syndrome of the hypochondriac or invalid wife whose husband is seeing another woman on the side. When Hitchcock first read Cornell Woolrich's short story called 'Rear Window' (1942), he would have recognised that syndrome, and from his encyclopaedic knowledge of true murders would probably have immediately thought of the Major Armstrong case. This passage from near the end of the story would have helped jog his memory:

> "Here's the way I have it lined up, just in theory. [Mrs Thorwald's] been in ill health for years, and [Mr Thorwald's] been out of work, and he got sick of that and of her both. Met this other - "
> "She'll be here later today, they're bringing her down under arrest."
> "He probably insured [his wife] for all he could get, and then started to poison her slowly ..."

Just one important detail about the wife is missing from Woolrich's story: her nagging. The fact that Hitchcock 'restored' that detail in his screen-version of the story (1954) seems to me good evidence that he had the Armstrong case in mind.

Still, it might not have been as simple a matter as I've made it sound. Following the trial and execution of Major Armstrong, the case had formed the basis of several fictional accounts. Perhaps it was one of the latter, or even a feature-film version, that Hitchcock particularly remembered. Here, two authors stand out: Aldous Huxley and Anthony Berkeley Cox ('Francis Iles').

Huxley (1894-1965) got in first. Indeed, his famous short story called 'The Gioconda Smile', which was clearly inspired by recent events at Kidwelly and Hay-on-Wye, was published as early as 1922. It tells of a doctor in a country town whose wife is an invalid, but whose own strong sexual urges compel him to flirt with, and sometimes seduce, a succession of women. Of these, two had been his special favourites: up at the manor, the enigmatic, still virginal (at 36) Janet Spence; and, literally closer to home, the altogether more common Doris, a good-looking Cockney lass. When the wife dies unexpectedly, it's Doris whom the doctor next marries. But soon he's charged with having poisoned his first spouse ...

The story has a surprise twist at the end: the doctor is found guilty and executed, but the true murderer (we learn) is actually Janet Spence. Hence the fittingness of the story's title, both in Huxley's original version (i.e. 'The Gioconda Smile') and in Zoltan Korda's 1947 film-version (**A Woman's Vengeance** - where Janet had been spurned by the doctor). The story remains one of Huxley's best-known works, probably not far behind his famous novel, 'Brave New World' (1932), in total number of readers.

Like Huxley, Anthony Berkeley Cox (1893-1970) began his career as a journalist. At first, he signed all his work, including a comic mystery novel, simply 'A.B. Cox'. But he is chiefly remembered today under the names of 'Anthony Berkeley' and 'Francis Iles'. Moreover, he seems to have become fascinated with the Major Armstrong case, for at least four of his best stories - two by Berkeley, and two by Iles - use significant details from it. Let's take them in order.

'The Avenging Chance' (1929), by Berkeley, is a short story just about as famous as Huxley's 'The Gioconda Smile'. (In 1950, a poll by 'Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine' put both of them in a list of the best detective stories ever written.) Its ingenious plot involves a box of chocolates which has been poisoned with arsenic. Now, the fact that the short story immediately proved hugely popular no doubt explains why its author went on to write a novel-length version, published the same year, called 'The Poisoned Chocolates Case'. This is still regularly in print. In it, an adulterous baronet gets a gift sample of chocolates in the post and passes it on, unopened, with fatal results. But there's a shock ending in store for readers.

Next, 'Malice Aforethought' (1931), by Iles this time, is unmistakable for being a novelisation of the Armstrong case. Its author seizes the opportunity to promote his favourite, anti-marriage, theme, as when the hen-pecked little country doctor ponders his situation:

> From what he had seen of marriage he did not doubt that most married men spend no small part of their lives devising wistful plans for killing off their wives - if only they had the courage to do it. Where his superiority was going to show itself was in putting his own dreams into action. (Chapter VI)

The theme is the same one that's at the heart of the two Anthony Berkeley stories I've already mentioned: for instance, 'The Avenging Chance' refers sardonically to 'that eighth wonder of the modern world, a happy marriage' - before it proceeds to show just how sour a modern marriage can turn.

Well, Alfred Hitchcock was also fascinated by the theme. Indeed, as noted in 'MacGuffin' 14, he told Francois Truffaut that he'd long wanted to make a film of 'Malice Aforethought', but finally he'd had to settle for directing just a half-hour radio version of it, in 1945. Also, he'd been able to film **Suspicion** (1941), which was adapted from Iles's 1932 'Before the Fact'.

At first glance, 'Before the Fact' doesn't bear much relation to the Armstrong case. That's partly because its story of a philandering husband who ends up murdering his wife is told from the wife's point of view, and sympathetically at that! Early in the novel, we learn that Lina, at 28, is unhappy because she isn't yet married:

> Having lived all her life in the country, where people do not talk about these things, she had never realised that the percentage of happy marriages among the population of Great Britain is probably something under .0001. (Chapter I)

Then, too, Iles makes considerable use of material he's taken from another famous British murder case, that of the gambler, forger, and mass-poisoner, William Palmer, who was hanged at Stafford in 1856 (see 'MacGuffin' 7). Nonetheless, in several ways - but especially the story's inclusion of details drawn from small-town life - it seems obvious that Iles hasn't forgetten the Armstrong case. You could almost say that 'Before the Fact' is simply a surreal, inside-out version of 'Malice Aforethought'. And, after a couple of other famous real-life cases, those of Crippen and Jack the Ripper, that of Major Armstrong does seem to me to offer the best clues to understanding Hitchcock's oh-so-British fascination with murder and murderers.

* * *

Two recent (1994) British films allude to Major Armstrong and the town of Hay-on-Wye. For British television, Mike Hodges has made a dramatised version of the Major's life, called **Dandelion Dead**. I don't think this has been shown in Australia yet, but I see that 'Sight and Sound' (May, 1994, p. 41) calls it 'astutely scripted' and notes in particular how, in the changing social climate after the Great War, the Major was 'held back by the stagnant snobbery of his spouse'. (Again I'm reminded of Lina in 'Before the Fact'.)

A British comedy-thriller released to cinemas and called **Deadly Advice** (d. Mandie Fletcher) was actually filmed on location at Hay. It purports to tell the story of a present-day Hay resident and mass-murderer, Jodie Greenwood (!), played by Jane Horrocks, who can talk to the spirits of murderers past, among whom, naturally, is the spirit of Major Armstrong. (Also doing walk-ons, and giving advice, are the spirits of Dr Crippen, Jack the Ripper, George Smith, i.e. the notorious 'Brides in the Bath' Murderer, and Kate Webster, who in 1870 was convicted of killing her widowed employer with an axe.) The 'Sight and Sound' reviewer writes that Hay is depicted as 'a hodge-podge of sexual repression and Enid Blyton cuteness, where butchers [still] wear straw hats and striped aprons and wave cheerio outside their shops.' Sounds to me like the filmmakers may have been thinking of a couple of other provincial towns in movies about murder: namely, those in Claude Chabrol's **Le Boucher** (1970) and David Lynch's bizarre **Blue Velvet** (1986).

* * *

Finally, then, and to set the record straight, here's what I know about the real Hay-on-Wye as it exists today. It has become known as the second-hand bookshop capital of the world. There are roughly thirty bookshops in Hay, of which the largest by far is Richard Booth's Bookshop in Lion Street, with more than 400,000 volumes. That Booth's should be the largest bookshop is fitting, for the eponymous Mr Booth pioneered the town's specialisation in second-hand books back in 1961. Thus he has been instrumental in putting Hay 'back on the map' where - if you exclude Major Armstrong's unintentional publicity-effort earlier this century - the town has scarcely figured since that moment in 1400 when Owain Glydwr sacked Hay Castle.

Curiously, Booth's has its own link to Hay Castle, which still dominates the town. The castle and its grounds have been converted into the Hay Castle Bookshops, where Mrs Booth, the wife of Richard Booth, specialises in books on American Indians, art, cartoons, and film. The stock of film books alone consists of 5,000 volumes, and there's also a large collection of film stills.

At the other end of town, another shop also carries a good stock of film books. This is the Hay Cinema Bookshop (aptly located in an old picture-house), which in addition specialises in books on travel, natural history, and art and architecture.

The picturesque town itself, set in the valley of the magnificent Wye River, even has an Australian connection. Many Australians have settled there. Most famous of them all, until his death in 1992, was the painter, Sidney Nolan.

I'm told that you can visit Hay-on-Wye all the year round, but that a particularly stimulating time to go is in May and June when the town holds its annual Summer Festival of Literature. Then the town fairly buzzes with books-connected activity, and writers both acclaimed and aspiring read their works in centuries-old settings. And if you can't go at present, there's still Booksearch. That's a service which specialises in tracking down out-of-print books, with no fee charged if the search fails. For details, write to Booksearch, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford HR3 5EA, United Kingdom. (Please enclose an International Reply Coupon.)

K.M.M.

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copies), $4 (Aust. or US) per surface-mailed copy (at least 4 copies please). BACK-ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA are $5 each. Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Foreign Correspondent** (no. 16), **Spellbound** (15), Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14), **Young & Innocent** (13), **The Paradine Case** (12), **Vertigo** (11), **Notorious** (10), **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). These are the issues most recommended.

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Engendering the Truth about 'Vertigo':
thoughts on an article by Leland Poague in the 1994 'Hitchcock Annual'

It is clear why the Romantic artists took 'Faust' as their bible: it depicts the quest for total experience.

- Jacques Barzun[1]

I had to kill the Other, once and for all, so that my Martine could live at last.

- Georges Simenon, 'Act of Passion'[2]

My specification of **Vertigo**'s participation in the genre of remarriage comedy can (and must) be brief - precisely **because** the links are so systematic.

- Leland Poague[3]

I have read and re-read Professor Poague's 37-page article on **Vertigo**, and have come away dissatisfied! The article doesn't seem to me to be driven by insight into what Hitchcock was trying to do; instead, Poague has seen fit to interpret the film according to certain generic concepts borrowed from Stanley Cavell, William Rothman, et al. Now, I'm not saying that a film is never greater, or other, than the sum of its makers' intentions. But in this case what seems to have occurred is that Poague has been guilty of a common critical failing. He has allowed his theories and his subjective knowledge to box him in. Alleged similarities between **Vertigo** (1958) and some films of Frank Capra (on which Poague is an authority)[4] receive a stilted a priori interpretation, a regrettable situation made worse by Poague's resort to a piece of **trompe l'oeil**: insisting on a correspondence where it's most tenuous! At such times, he will usually say that the correspondence is 'beyond dispute' or 'self-evident' ...[5]

More on that below. In addition, what follows represents an extension to the article on **Vertigo** and its sources that I wrote for 'MacGuffin' 11.[6] There, I too drew a parallel: namely, between what I saw as a key aspect of **Vertigo**, its vitalism, and Arthur Schopenhauer's term 'Will', or life-force, which in fact has a long tradition, spanning West and East. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's 'Ligeia', written in the 19th century, thrice quotes this revealing passage from 'Lux Orientalis'/'Light of the East' by English theologian Joseph Glanvill (1636-80):

> And the will ... dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigour? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doeth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.

I'll explain. First, notice how Glanvill, anticipating Schopenhauer (1788-1860), contrasts the imperishable - but destructive - will with human mortality. In 'Ligeia', the eponymous first wife of the story's narrator seems to return miraculously to life, as if embodying will itself.

Next, Poe (1809-49) was the young Hitchcock's favourite author, a fact that may explain why you feel Poe's influence so strongly when you read the novel 'D'Entre les Morts' (c. 1955) that Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac wrote with Hitchcock in mind, and which did in fact become **Vertigo**. In turn, though, as I noted in 'MacGuffin' 11, that novel also shows the influence of the Belgian writer, Georges Simenon (1903-89), about whose life and work Narcejac had recently produced a most appreciative study, 'Le Cas "Simenon"' (1950). Accordingly, I'll try below to demonstrate the **specific** influence of Simenon's novel,

'Lettre à Mon Juge' (1947), called in English 'Act of Passion', and its French film version, Henri Verneuil's **Le Fruit Défendu/Forbidden Fruit** (1952), on 'D'Entre les Morts', and hence, indirectly, on **Vertigo**.

Also in 'MacGuffin' 11, I showed how **Vertigo** appears to allude to various 'archetypal' fascinating women in fiction (e.g. Ligeia, Marguerite Gautier). To that list I would now add Goethe's Helen of Troy, who supplants the simple and abused Margaret/Gretchen in Faust's fancy, and who effectively points him towards 'the world of eternity where all the opposites are transcended' (as Dr Jolande Jacobi puts it)[7] - though in herself she fails to give him the lasting happiness he has sought. The fact that, as we'll see, 'Faust' offers several other parallels with **Vertigo** suggests that Hitchcock may well have had the two Parts of Goethe's play (1808, 1831) in mind when making his film.

* * *

Leland Poague tells us that 'little of substance is finally left unsaid in either **Vertigo** or [Capra's 1946] **It's a Wonderful Life**'.[8] Citing Peter Brooks's 'The Melodramatic Imagination' (1976), Poague assigns to **Vertigo** a number of characteristics of melodrama:[9] **topoi** (motifs) such as 'the "enclosed garden"' and 'the "tribunal scene"'; a '"fascination with the city, either as the symbol of corruption lying in wait" or "as an unexplored world offering layers of mystery"'; '"evil monks and nuns"' working '"at the behest of a guilty aristocrat"'; tyrannical villains who oppress innocent victims who '"most often belong to the democratic universe"'; and, very importantly, 'the trope of "muteness", in which "Virtue, expulsed, eclipsed, apparently fallen, cannot effectively articulate the cause of the right"'. More generally, there is 'melodrama's deepest ambition', which is 'to "say all"'.[10]

Further, Poague makes extensive use of Stanley Cavell's concept (from 'Pursuits of Happiness', 1981) of 'the Hollywood comedy of remarriage', a genre in which the film's drive 'is not to get the central pair together, but to get them **back** together, together **again**'.[11] For Cavell, such a reuniting of a couple is designed to show them the deepest, spiritual meaning of their bond, to effect a working out in 'dailiness' (Cavell's term) of the **potential** of marriage.

Lastly, Poague invokes William Rothman's essay on **Vertigo** (in 'The "I" of the Camera', 1988), which notes how Hitchcock's film may be seen to concern 'a search for [both male and female?] identity'[12] and what Cavell, a colleague of Rothman's at Harvard, 'has called "the identifying and inhabitation of a feminine region of the self"'.[13] 'If this is true,' continues Rothman, '**Vertigo** has a close affinity to so-called women's films, in particular to the genre Cavell terms "the melodrama of the unknown woman."'[14] Only, in the case of **Vertigo**, it's ultimately the director himself who is the 'feminine' figure, who longs for 'acknowledgment'. 'Hitchcock', says Rothman, '**is** the unknown woman ...'[15]

(On the special Cavell-Rothman term, 'acknowledgment', Poague[16] usefully cites a passage from 'Pursuits of Happiness' stating that to **acknowledge** someone is to put a halt to a 'circle of vengeance' that has done violence to the true identity and worth of that person. Implicit, too, is Rothman's central thesis in 'Hitchcock - the Murderous Gaze', 1982, that Hitchcock's camera is continually wreaking its own vengeance on the naïve spectator who won't **acknowledge** Hitchcock's authorship of the film's world.)

The above, then, summarises the powerful theoretical underpinning for what Poague now attempts: an explication of the dynmaics of **Vertigo**, aimed at showing how it constitutes, like Shakespeare's 'Othello', '"a failed comedy of remarriage" in which "the reunion is hideously parodied and becomes possible only a moment too late"'.[17] Already the strengths and drawbacks of Poague's argument may be anticipated: how, for instance, it catches the film's pungency, but also how it locks itself into a most inflexible position. Typically, Poague **insists** on his interpretation. The reader is told that 'apart from grasping [the notion 'that **Hitchcock** is the film's primary token of unknownness'] ... there is no way of comprehending the power and poignancy of the film's last shot'.[18]

* * *

Here I must say that nothing in the above seems to me **incompatible** with my own, essentially 'Schopenhauerian', understanding of Hitchcock's films, and of **Vertigo** in particular. For instance, when I first read one of Professor Brian Henderson's criticisms of 'Pursuits of Happiness' - that Cavell's use of terms like 'true marriage' disregards 'historical or material realities' -[19] perversely I thought of

Sören Kierkegaard and his profound reflections on conjugal love in 'Either'/Or' (1843). Then, on reading Cavell's book itself, I found that its author had gone one better than I had, by invoking (re Leo McCarey's **The Awful Truth**, 1937) both Kierkegaard's 'Repetition' (1843) and Friedrich Nietzsche's doctrine of the Eternal Return![20] Note that both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche had read Schopenhauer,[21] and that both of them had **made a point of** rejecting what they thought was the emphasis of his contemporary and foe, Hegel, on the primacy of historical, 'objective' knowledge.[22] As for Schopenhauer himself, a passage in his 'The World as Will and Representation' virtually anticipates Kierkegaard's central doctrine:

> Concepts always remain universal, and so do not reach down to the particular; yet it is precisely the particular that has to be dealt with in life.[23]

Now, firstly, could **that** in fact be the message of **Vertigo**'s last shot? Is **that** what's behind the film's implied critique of 'Scottie' (James Stewart)? Before answering those questions, I've some related observations to make.

Here's one. Given the detectable influence of both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche - as well as Goethe - on some of the plays of Henrik Ibsen,[24] I believe Cavell is merely being consistent when he introduces into a discussion of Hollywood romantic comedies some key passages from Ibsen's 'A Doll House' (1879).[25] So I accept Poague's point, effectively a rejoinder to Brian Henderson, that Cavell is 'fully mindful' of how marriage is both 'a trope of the social contract' and 'equally a trope (and a tool) of patriarchal oppressiveness'.[26] By the same token, I could wish that Poague had made at least a passing allusion in his analysis of **Vertigo** to Ibsen's 'The Master Builder' (1892), a play which provides some intriguing parallels to the critique of Scottie offered by Hitchcock's film. For instance, the ruthless but now aging master-builder, Solness, inspired by the woman called Hilde Wangel, finally overcomes his guilt-feelings and his fear of heights, only to fall to his death from a tower. Might such symbolism as Ibsen employs here perhaps **also** further illuminate the effect Hitchcock sought at the end of **Vertigo**?

And again, that a lack of 'acknowledgment', at the level of plot, was sometimes an issue for Hitchcock is borne out by a key moment, and indeed the very title, of the film he made immediately before **Vertigo**: namely, **The Wrong Man** (1957). In 'MacGuffin' 6, I drew on Kierkegaard (and Dickens and Jung) to show how the bourgeois 'Manny' Balestrero (Henry Fonda) is portrayed as 'the man who knew too little'.[27] At the film's climax, Manny fails a crucial test when he finally confronts his 'double'. He immediately assumes this other man's absolute guilt, as various people had earlier assumed his own. 'Do you realise what you've done to my wife?' he asks peevishly, without thought of (acknowledging) this man himself or **his** wife and family - and certainly without thought for Jung's point that 'None of us stands outside humanity's black collective shadow'. By contrast, Hitchcock's in-person introduction to **The Wrong Man** (set in a shadowy film studio, prefiguring the 'noirish' look of what follows) makes at least a gesture towards his own 'at-one-ment' with the events and characters portrayed. I'll come back to **The Wrong Man**, and the term 'at-one-ment', shortly.

To sum up this part of my argument, I simply want to re-affirm its broad Schopenhauerian content. Everything I've just described shows the general working of a basically blind, typically destructive force. Its most significant manifestation in the West has been called 'Faustian', but it's by no means confined to the sort of masculine striving associated by Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) with Faust and Western man generally. On the contrary, the world's Will is operative everywhere, at many levels (Schopenhauer says at **all** levels). Thus a recent book by an eminent biologist, emeritus Professor Charles Birch, significantly called 'Regaining Compassion for Humanity and Nature' (1993), comes close to expressing that idea when it describes how 'all living creatures' have 'an inner life and internal relations'. It adds that

> the concept of internal relations extends right down to entities such as protons. Of course, we don't talk about conscious feelings at that level, but we do suppose that something analogous to mind is present there.[28]

As I showed in 'MacGuffin' 11, **Vertigo** is very much about the Schopenhauerian idea that only compassion, which resists the promptings of Will, can effect a true oneness of individuals in this world, the world of phenomena ('Representation'). Therefore, something else I find significant about Birch's observation

just quoted is that it occurs in a chapter he calls 'At-One-Ment' - which carries the additional meaning of 'atonement' (for past divisiveness and environmental spoliation). I'm impelled to ask whether that particular dual meaning isn't one more (in this case, ironic) connotation of **Vertigo**'s ending.

* * *

Speaking of dual meanings ... the reader may have noticed above how I've used contrary meanings of the term 'Faustian'. As applied to Goethe's play, the term means 'open', i.e. 'open to all experience'. But when applied to Faust himself, or his kind as described by Spengler, the term means 'closed', i.e. 'self-centred' or 'single-visioned'. Well, every time that Leland Poague insists too heavily, or improperly, on a particular interpretation of a scene or effect in Hitchcock, I see him as guilty of writing 'Faustian' film criticism - in the Spenglerian sense of the term! Similarly, I see Scottie in **Vertigo** as essentially an unregenerated Faust-figure (see below), but I see the film itself as much more **healthily** 'Faustian', i.e. endeavouring to be as 'open' as possible.

The film's 'method' involves the use of ambiguity, multi-valence, and self-critique (reflexiveness). Above, I defended Cavell and Poague against Brian Henderson's jibe that Cavell ignores historical realities. In truth, though, I feel that Poague's citing of some attributes of melodrama (which also apply to much 19th-century fiction and 19th-century art-forms generally) does perhaps serve to hide his inattention to the historical reality that is critiqued in **Vertigo**. Note that I believe thinkers like Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, et al., deal particularly with **inner** reality (which is very important, very real, and certainly for much of the time the stuff of **Vertigo**), but now I'll mention briefly some aspects of an equally important **outer** reality. I especially want to mention a recent historical study by Peter Gay (but see also the review in this 'MacGuffin' of Robert Corber's 'In the Name of National Security'). Gay's book, published last year, bears the descriptive title, 'The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud'.

19th-century bourgeois society, says Gay, was marked by an aggressive will to dominate and control, from the development of industrialisation and urban growth to the polarisation of the sexes. Pivotal was how individuals and classes, races and nations, were divided into insiders and outsiders. According to Gay, the construction of a hateful Other was central to bourgeois (Victorian) ideology. Women, through being defined as the mysterious sex, were decidedly 'Other'.[29]

Gay elaborates on that last point in quasi-Freudian terms: 'by concealing woman behind the veils of her enigmatic nature, men could evade the unpalatable truth that their mother was a sexual being'.[30] Now, without at all exhausting the many potential readings of the scene in question, let's come back to the climax of **Vertigo**, i.e. the scene on the bell-tower. In effect, what happens is that the sudden arrival of a mother-figure, literally a mother-superior, garbed in black, deprives Scottie of the mysterious and desirable Madeleine/Judy (Kim Novak) he'd finally seemed on the point of winning. That fits with how, in 'MacGuffin' 11, I quoted art lecturer Victor Burgin as saying that Scottie throughout the film enacts 'a primary scenario of male Oedipal desire for the mother'. Necessarily, of course, in Scottie's pursuit of Madeleine/Judy (and 'Carlotta'), he is unconscious of the true nature of his quest; somewhat differently, when he's with Margaret/'Midge', his girlfriend of college days, his desire is diminished, precisely because Midge is so **overtly** 'motherly'.

In 'MacGuffin' 11, too, I observed that 'in **Vertigo** even nuns are figures of both life and death'. That's because Scottie is indeed repressed. As the mother-superior's title indicates, she effectively represents what Camille Paglia calls the Great Mother. As such, her apparition on the bell-tower may recall Faust's journey to the supernatural realm of 'the Mothers', where the spirit of Helen exists in eternity. As Paglia says:

> The Mothers appear in 'Faust' when the hero tries to materialise the spirit of Helen. Adult love is overshadowed by maternal claims to priority. The male struggles through his sexual stages, returning to the mother even when he thinks himself most free of her.[31]

Paglia notes how Faust 'descending to the Mothers makes a journey to **terra incognita**, his own repressed feminine side, where his mother still dwells'.[32] Interestingly, whereas in most modern treatments by artists of the Great Mother, 'she controls only green nature', in 'Faust' she inhabits a 'gloomy Stygian cavern with which western myth associates swarthy male hierarchs'.[33] I'm reminded of how I further

wrote, again in 'MacGuffin' 11, that '**everything** [in **Vertigo**] reflects [a similar] dualism. For instance, is Muir Woods with its Sequoias ("always green, ever-living") a place of life or is it (being dark and overwhelming) a place of death? Is even the busy city of San Francisco truly living, or is it just a place of death-in-life? (Its people seems to move as if underwater.)'

* * *

In order to better connect the matters raised in the last section, let's first note other parallels between **Vertigo** and 'Faust'. Paglia sums up Goethe's great drama thus: 'Gretchen is naïve sentiment, Mephistopheles cynical sophistication. Faust is caught in the middle, like all mankind.'[34] I think we may see a similar configuration in **Vertigo**. Margaret/Gretchen becomes Margaret/Midge, perhaps the hero's first sweetheart, though in this case their engagement lasted just three weeks before Midge broke it off. The fact is that Midge senses that she lacks something that Scottie seeks, which is precisely mystery and sophistication. Yet, for those with eyes to notice it, she has another quality, her capacity for compassion. Think of her reaction to the story of Carlotta ('Poor thing!') ...[35]

Enter the film's Mephistopheles, the suave and fiendish Gavin Elster. He quickly grasps Scottie's discontent, his frustrated ambitions. In effect, Gavin now presents Scottie with his true heart's-desire: the infinitely sophisticated yet mysterious and other-worldly Madeleine, the film's equivalent of Helen of Troy. For a time, Scottie tastes happiness, only to be left desolate when Madeleine 'departs' (cf 'Faust', Part Two, Act III).

Scottie, like Faust before him, now begins to think of true beauty as something spiritual. At least, that seems to be an underlying meaning of the last third of **Vertigo**, in which Scottie attempts, artist-like,[36] to re-create Madeleine in Judy. (Here, cf 'Faust', Part Two, Act IV.) The film moves to its climax, described above.

Camille Paglia offers this further comment on the two Parts of 'Faust': 'Goethe makes an analogy between the exploitation of women by men and the exploitation of nature by the self-infatuated western mind.'[37] Exactly. It's as if Goethe had anticipated by nearly two centuries Professor Birch's argument concerning our desperate need to seek at-one-ment/atonement with our environment and each other. Sadly, the means advocated - by Goethe, by his contemporary Schopenhauer, and by Birch - involving compassion, is precisely what Scottie, in his rejection of Midge, has forgone. Given the imperfect, i.e. repressed and repressive, world that **Vertigo** depicts, the nun's behest that 'God have mercy' sounds rather like both the film's message and its ultimate irony. We may even vaguely hope (in defiance of Freud and passion) that Scottie and Midge can be reconciled, but the general outlook is surely deeply pessimistic.

Here's another irony. Leland Poague astutely notes some individual details of the above pattern: for instance, he sees the sort of person Gavin Elster is, though he likens him not to Mephistopheles but to the 'guilty aristocrat' figure of melodrama (Elster is played by the English actor Tom Helmore).[38] Likewise, he sees how put-upon are the women in the film, and he's especially eloquent in an abstract way about 'male-authored fictions of deficient female inheritance or parenting ...'[39] But while detailing all this destructiveness and masculine aggression, Poague, somewhat like Cavell and, even more, Rothman, never clearly defines it - or its shaping by history - except indirectly, as what needs to be overcome in 'dailiness' and 'acknowledgment'.[40] Consequently, his writing overall, for all its energy, tends to show the closed 'Faustian' character I've attributed to it above. A further consequence, or perhaps a cause, is his undue reverence for his two Harvard power-brokers - neither of whom, in my view, can hold a candle to Camille Paglia in matters of good writing and sustained insight.[41] I detect a parallel with what seems to have befallen Peter Gay. Reviewing 'The Cultivation of Hatred', Melbourne academic Anthony Elliott comments:

> It seems to me that in defending the cultural rewards [if not the methods] of aggression, Gay slides into an indiscriminate celebration of power and mastery as such. ... For all the excellence of its historical analysis, 'The Cultivation of Hatred' is flawed by the imperative to sustain the authority of self-legislating aggression, thus downplaying the counter-story of affection, intimacy and compassion.[42]

From an attitude of compassion comes openness. So my point is this. Film scholars who aren't theory-bound, who aren't primarily just system-builders (or system-endorsers), should be able to see

that, for example, the last scene and the last shot of **Vertigo** allow **many** readings. I've already implied some of those readings above.

Now, I would concur with a reading that says an aspect of the last scene, at the level of plot, is Scottie's lack of 'acknowledgment' of Judy, at least up until this moment. (Though perhaps not even now. Scottie's exclamation of 'I made it' seems as revealing of basic self-centredness as Manny's 'Do you realise what you've done to my wife?' at the end of **The Wrong Man**.) But such an attitude of Scottie's in the past also illustrates the Schopenhauerian/Kierkegaardian point that most of us fail to properly deal with the **particular** in life - occasioning in **Vertigo** Judy's lament that Scottie isn't treating her authentically. In turn, a reason for that is Scottie's 'Faustian' ambitiousness, like Solness's in 'The Master Builder'.

Crucially, I wonder what the film's last **shot** is saying. Is there, for instance, any question of 'atonement'? Well, I've long felt that the typical ending of a Hitchcock film is reminding its audience, 'Now it's over to you', and **not** asking selfishly, 'Why don't you acknowledge me?' Here I think Hitchcock is following the path of such artists as Goethe, Thomas Mann (who wrote his own version of the Faust story), Luigi Pirandello (one of the theatre's great advocates of the need for compassion), and even Georges Simenon (see below). Each ends up telling us of himself that having explored to the limits of the human psyche, he remains baffled by the pathology he finds there. In Goethe's case, it's surely significant that for all his vast erudition and insight, he always refused to answer questions about one aspect of 'Faust': its episode of 'the Mothers'. Camille Paglia calls that episode a trip 'to the omphalos of the universe, a female heart of darkness'.[43] (Note: I would further concur, in general, with a reading of **Vertigo** that emphasises **Hitchcock's** 'feminity' - but again see below.)

Some other points. I noted above Paglia's observation that these days the Great Mother is usually only associated with green nature, but I added that in **Vertigo**, as in 'Faust', the figure's chthonic (dark and ghostly) aspect also seems to be implied, notably in the Muir Woods scene. So perhaps the following claim by Poague isn't quite as unlikely as it may appear on a casual reading:

> I take it that Scottie senses himself as unknown, as empty, as ghostly, - a trope taken over quite literally from **It's a Wonderful Life** where Mary's mysterious disappearance from her bathrobe, only to reappear in a hydrangea bush, provides the 'green world' prototype for **Vertigo**'s Muir Woods sequence in which a fantastically evanescent Madeleine accuses Scottie of having taken, like George of Mary, no notice.[44]

But if that isn't, exactly, risible, for me it still shows Poague at his most typically over-dogmatic (and cavalier, where matters of hard evidence are concerned.)[45]

And a couple of related matters. As noted, Poague's main thesis is that **Vertigo** is '"a failed comedy of remarriage"'. Such a stretching of the meaning of both 'comedy' and '(re)marriage' may fairly be permitted in the case of Shakespeare's plays (which all at least refer to marriage, regardless of whether the play in question is nominally a comedy or a tragedy). And certainly Hitchcock at times worked in the genre of the **Hollywood** comedy of remarriage, both overtly (as in the case of **Mr and Mrs Smith**, 1941) and covertly (as in such films as **Rebecca**, 1940, and **Marnie**, 1964). But what of a play like Goethe's 'Faust' (admittedly influenced by Shakespeare), a story like Poe's 'Ligeia', and a film like William Dieterle's **Portrait of Jennie** (1948) - all of which have correspondences in **Vertigo**?[46] In at least one of those works, marriage is never an issue; in two of them, comedy is virtually absent. On the other hand, they **all** seem to me very much concerned with matters of Will and its permutations ...

Lastly, I think it's ludicrous of Poague to claim that a shot of Madeleine's garments on an impromptu clothesline in Scottie's apartment must represent 'a direct allusion' to a scene in Capra's **It Happened One Night** (1934);[47] or that **Vertigo** is 'aptly' to be compared to Preston Sturges's **The Lady Eve** (1941) simply because both are about the ups and downs of human existence and have things like dream-sequences (with an avuncular British villain) in common.[48] Any experienced film teacher remembers plenty of occasions when a film shown to a class on Monday had seemed to possess 'marvellous correspondences' to a quite unrelated film shown to a different class on Thursday - if you take my meaning. But I'd have thought it a **sine qua non** that such a teacher should quickly learn to distinguish the authentic connection from the fortuitous. I'm not sure that Poague has done that here. As for his claims that **Vertigo** alludes directly to the Capra films mentioned, those claims simply lack all proof. By contrast,

when I sometimes tell people that a couple of scenes in **Mr and Mrs Smith** (the Mama Lucy's episodes) are adapted from ones in King Vidor's **The Citadel** (1938), filmed in England and starring Hitchcockian actor Robert Donat, the borrowing is both palpable and demonstrable. Also, Hitchcock's great admiration for **Vidor's** films is on record ...

* * *

In this last part of my article, I come to a 'test case'. Two then-recent French films seem to have influenced the authors Boileau and Narcejac while they were writing 'D'Entre les Morts'. One was Robert Siodmak's **Le Grand Jeu/The Big Game** (1954), with its redhead who 'rematerialises', subtly changed, as a brunette (see 'MacGuffin' 11). The other was Henri Verneuil's **Le Fruit Défendu/Forbidden Fruit**, adapted from a typically fine (though non-Maigret) Simenon novel whose French title, 'Lettre à Mon Juge', refers to how it purports to be written by a condemned man who has strangled his mistress. (In 'D'Entre les Morts', too, the central character, called Flavières, strangles his mistress, Madeleine/Renée.) Verneuil's film stars Fernandel, in one of that actor's rare non-comedy roles, as the twice-married Dr Charles Alavoine; Francoise Arnoul plays the doctor's mistress, Martine Englebert.

Actually, I **most** want to stress the influence of Simenon's novel on Boileau and Narcejac's work, for the reason that the film-version had to make several compromises with the original (as Narcejac would have known, having lately written about it).[49] In particular, Martine's death has gone. Also gone, therefore, is the core idea of a man's 'killing the thing he loves' and Alavoine's insistence to his 'judge' - the examining magistrate - that he had not been mad: rather, as he says, 'I killed her that she might live'.[50]

If I now recount some further main ideas and plot-points of Simenon's novel, I trust my readers will forgive such a necessary undertaking, and will be alert to spot correspondences, or otherwise, with what has been discussed above. The important issue, I think, isn't so much whether 'Lettre à Mon Juge' influenced 'D'Entre les Morts' (that will surely soon become obvious), as whether what I describe lends support to a 'comedy of remarriage' interpretation. And, if so, how far. After all, the two novels between them constitute a veritable ur-**Vertigo**, well worthy of study by disinterested Hitchcock scholars!

* * *

So let's start with this. Alevoine's first sexual experience, he tells us, had occurred when he was sixteen, in the city of Caen - which turns out to be the native city of his examining magistrate.[51] For a few hours, the young woman had given Alevoine 'the sensation of infinity'.[52]

But in later years he had endured two passionless marriages. Commenting on that time, he remembers it as no more than 'a waking dream'.[53] Eventually he had found himself, still married to his second wife, Armande, settled comfortably in the barracks city of La Roche-sur-Yon and practising as a local doctor. But one day he had needed to go alone to Nantes to treat a patient. There, filling in time before catching his train home, he had encountered Martine in a bar, and his life had been transformed.

Though Martine seems outwardly 'a banal little thing',[54] Alevoine quickly detects in her a still-burning spark of goodness. Quickly becoming very possessive of her, he feels that he has leapt 'suddenly into unknown regions of space'[55] and that she, for her part, has 'a will, no less desperate, to escape ... to be delivered'.[56]

He takes her back with him to La Roche, and installs her at first in a local hotel, the Hotel de l'Europe. (She had been coming to La Roche anyway, fairly obviously to be the new mistress of a wealthy property owner who lives in the town, and whom she had met in a Paris bar.)[57] Meanwhile, Alevoine still goes about his practice which he conducts from his home, where he lives with both Armande and his elderly mother.

Now he finds himself existing in a state of 'continual tension'[58] aggravated by the unusual weather - gloomy and windy - which reminds him of Caen.[59] Nonetheless, for the first time, he feels in himself 'The irresistible force of life',[60] and comes to believe that he's no longer 'a man without a shadow'.[61] At last he has found love. However, neither his wife nor his mother appears at first to notice any change in him.

Martine begins to work for Alevoine as his daytime assistant. They seize what surreptitious moments together they can, and he visits her after hours at her hotel. Their love-making becomes ever more passionate, though on his side it's prone to violence. He later explains this to the examining magistrate as representing his attempt to try and eradicate in Martine what he calls the 'Other': the woman who had frequented bars, smoked lipstick-stained cigarettes, and crossed her legs in a certain way.[62] By the same token, Alevoine makes an interesting set of denials. He denies 'the least predisposition to sadism or to masochism';[63] equally firmly, he says he 'did not create the new Martine. I have no such pretension. I don't take myself for God the Father.'[64]

A new phase in the couple's relations begins when Armande finally learns what has been going on, and the couple head off together 'for the unknown'.[65] Alevoine finds work in Paris. I see this final part of Simenon's novel as roughly corresponding to the later stages of **Vertigo**. For one thing, a sense of unreality asserts (or re-asserts) itself. Alevoine speaks of how whole areas of Paris seem to him to be 'peopled with phantoms',[66] yet he knows that these people are actually 'flesh and blood'.[67] He and Martine now tend to keep to themselves, and to go out very little. At the same time, his **inner** 'phantoms'[68] assail him the more, and both he and Martine sense what is coming.

The couple have their compensations. In an explicit passage, Martine for the first time experiences full orgasm, not just a faked one.[69] Shortly after this, Alevoine announces that they are going to take a few days' vacation, 'a pilgrimage',[70] to Martine's native city, Liège, in Belgium. To the reader, i.e. to the examining magistrate, Alevoine confides that he now 'felt that I had to get possession of her childhood, for I was jealous of [that] too'.[71]

We already know, from an earlier description, that Martine as a girl had attended the convent of the Daughters of the Cross, and had been a boarder there. Now the couple go there together, and to several of the other places in Liège that hold strong memories for her. 'All that she had told me', says Alevoine at the start of a striking passage, 'was like a novel for young girls, and I went there to get at the truth, which turned out to be not so very different. I saw the big house, Rue Hors-Château, which she had so often described, and its famous porch with the forged iron hand-rail.'[72] And so on.

But finally even here 'phantoms' catch up with them. When a young man in a café calls out to Martine by name, the spell is broken. 'The more she was mine ... the more I felt the need of absorbing her in even greater measure.'[73] Back in Paris, Alevoine strangles Martine in what he insists to the examining magistrate was a premeditated act. 'I killed her that she might live, and our eyes continued to embrace to the very end.'[74]

He adds a coda: 'If I am writing you this long letter, it is so that the day I finally weigh anchor, someone will succeed to our heritage, so that my Martine and her love will never wholly die.'[75]

* * *

As I see it, that final sentence is one more equivalent of the last shot in **Vertigo**, but it **isn't** asking the reader to 'acknowledge' Simenon behind his story and his characters. Its appeal is to something more impersonal than that, more like the world's Will. That is, to something indestructible, that lasts forever, of which we are all part but certainly never 'possess', and are only ever possessed **by**.

Note that Alevoine remembers his first sexual experience as having shown him 'infinity'. That's a cliché, of course, but equally the expression of a powerful archetype. Leland Poague finds significant that in **The Lady Eve** Henry Fonda twice tells Barbara Stanwyck that he feels he's known her forever ('You seemed to go way back'): Poague offers this as part of his 'self-evident'[76] case for why **The Lady Eve** and **Vertigo** are alike, indeed for why they're both 'comedies of remarriage'. But he's being very facile, I think. **Vertigo**, in which Madeleine provides Scottie with a glimpse of 'eternity' (see 'MacGuffins' 1, 11) resembles many other art-works far more than it resembles **The Lady Eve**. Just two of those works are 'Lettre à Mon Juge' and (I'm arguing) 'Faust': in neither of them, notice, is the emphasis on remarriage but rather on **escaping from** or **avoiding** marriage.[77] Further, I'd have to say that Poague seems at best only somewhat aware (from his reading of Northrop Frye?) of the archetypal resonances operating in Hitchcock's film. On matters of 'infinity' and 'eternity' (space and time) that are relevant to **Vertigo**, I much prefer this discussion of 'Faust' by Jung's associate, Dr Jolande Jacobi:

> In the first half Gretchen carries the projection of Faust's anima [his unconscious feminine side]. But the tragic end of this relationship compels him to ... seek this part of his psyche in himself. He finds it in another world, in the 'underworld' of his unconscious, symbolised by Helen of Troy. ... Helen is the typical anima figure, Faust's soul-image. He wrestles with it in different transformations and on different levels up to its supreme manifestation, the Mater Gloriosa [Glorious Mother]. Only then is he redeemed, permitted to enter the world of eternity where all the opposites are transcended.[78]

Well, neither Alevoine in 'Lettre à Mon Juge' nor Scottie in **Vertigo** ends up redeemed, exactly, but I've no doubt that's mainly because the two works keep a foot planted firmly in an 'historical' context, the workaday world of the reader or viewer: the world where all ideals and dreams get compromised.[79]

Or worse. Alevoine, one more Everyman figure, has a strong sense of the daily world as largely 'Other', as corrupt(ing) and vulgar. That could be just the legacy of his bourgeois upbringing (cf Peter Gay's 'The Cultivation of Hatred'), but the novel gives plenty of evidence for there being a matching reality (e.g. as represented by the wealthy property owner who picks up and drops a succession of mistresses from Paris bars). Hence this key passage from near the end of the novel:

> It was Martine, the real Martine before the bastards had sullied her, that I persisted in trying to extricate. She was the one I loved and whom I love, who is mine, who is so much a part of my own body that I can no longer distinguish between them.[80]

Schopenhauer said that the world is an endless round of suffering, and that seems to me what 'Lettre à Mon Juge' and **Vertigo** both confirm, very poignantly. Moreover, in my view neither work can be seen to hold out either marriage **or** its avoidance - or anything else - as a 'solution'. Both works are informed by a special truthfulness, even about the way in which 'inner' and 'outer' reality finally meet at the level of the body. Predictably, that too is a basic Schopenhauerian insight about the nature of Will.[81]

* * *

Finally, I want to query a couple more of Poague's emphases. Though it's clear that Scottie in **Vertigo** has an unconscious 'mother-fixation' (perhaps echoing Hitchcock's own?), I wonder whether it's true to say, as Poague does, that Scottie shows a 'propensity for dwelling in a world of women, even and especially in his dreams'.[82] There is, in fact, just one dream-sequence in **Vertigo**, and in it we see Scottie fall from the bell-tower where earlier we'd seen Madeleine/Judy fall. But such identification (if that's what it is) hardly suggests, let alone proves, a wish on Scottie's part to dwell among women. After all, we'd also seen, at the start of the film, a near-identical shot of Scottie's police colleague falling from a roof. Surely the 'identification' involved is largely just a sign of good, old-fashioned guilt feelings, a willingness to have died in the victims' places - and/or a sign that already, like Alevoine in 'Lettre à Mon Juge', Scottie (for whatever reason) can hardly distinguish his own body from someone else's ...

As for the scene that Poague says amuses 'most audiences', in which Scottie describes for the madam in the dress-shop the precise neckline and sleeve-length of the suit he wants for Judy, I must disagree that it shows Scottie to be 'far more comfortable' in the '"feminine" world'.[83] What I think it mainly shows - the source of the viewer's amusement - is Scottie's obsession, his virtual **obliviousness** to his surroundings. (Yet note, too, his exaggerated 'masculine' bossiness, a sign of his underlying embarrassment at the particular situation his determination to re-create Madeleine has put him in.) Earlier, he had been a reasonably good cop: vide Captain Hansen's testimony at the inquest into Madeleine's death. True, he would often drop in after hours to visit the companionable Midge - for Scottie, no more than that now - but that's hardly evidence for his feeling 'more comfortable' among women. Indeed, recall that when Midge had happened to introduce him to a new type of brassière, he had actually shown traces of alarm - poking at it with a stick and asking 'What's this do-hickey here?' (We sense, of course, that deep down it has stirred his mother-fixation.)

No, I'd say that Scottie is simply a discontented all-rounder (cf the start of 'Faust'), and a good professional, and that **that** is the significance of the casting of James Stewart in the role.[84] In turn, such casting - such exceptional **range** as Stewart possessed - makes matters all the more affecting

for audiences when the time comes for Scottie to show whether he can swallow his pride and be truly forgiving and compassionate (in Schopenhauer's terms, turn his will back on itself). As we find out, he can't, which failure is pretty much a recurring story of humankind to date. That is, we're reminded of our own essential pathology, which may betray us yet again, one of these days ...

* * *

Several times, Poague's approach to **Vertigo** is so 'theoretical' that he fails to see or hear accurately what occurs. In the Muir Woods scene, 'a fantastically evanescent Madeleine' doesn't in fact accuse **Scottie** of 'having taken ... no notice':[85] she apostrophises 'God'. ('Here I was born and here I died. It was only a moment for you.') Judy-as-Madeleine-as-Carlotta is here playing at being 'eternal' (or 'eternally recurrent'), no doubt as Gavin Elster had instructed her to do - with the intention of trading on Scottie's sense of weakness, his 'Faustian' longing for power and/or escape.[86]

Again, when Hitchcock makes his cameo appearance in **Vertigo**, outside Gavin's shipyard, what he's carrying is not, as Poague claims, a flashlight, but a horn case. (I must admit, though, that for years I took it to be a coal-scuttle! For being at last corrected on that, I'm grateful to Jane Sloan's 'Alfred Hitchcock: a filmography and bibliography', 1995.) Undeterred, Poague launches, Cavell-fashion,[87] into an ambitious interpretation involving Hitchcock's intention to mark '**himself** as mortal, as seeking no exemption; we might say he is enlightened [about human frailty]' ...[88]

Ironically, that interpretation seems to derive in part from the one I made in 'MacGuffin' 6 - and have cited above - concerning Hitchcock's expressionistic pre-credits cameo in **The Wrong Man**. Poague and I once had an agreeable exchange of letters about what I wrote there. In his **Vertigo** article, he seems in addition to avail himself of another of my previous points - that several characters in **The Wrong Man** are like ghosts or wraiths - in order to say repeatedly of Scottie and Madeleine/Judy that they're bound together in 'a sense of mutual ghostliness',[89] of mutual repression. (Cf my point in 'MacGuffin' 6 that Manny in **The Wrong Man** knows 'too little', that he's no Nietzschean 'Superman'.) I hasten to claim no offence from Professor Poague! I see that his remarks on 'ghostliness' **also**, or chiefly, derive from Cavell - writing on how 'Women's lives heretofore have been nonexistent, as if they have haunted the world'.[90] And I recognise that we're **all** 'repressed' in one way or another, i.e. not always giving due 'acknowledgment'! That last point explains why the critical task still seems to me to involve helping each other pursue true(r) judgment (at-one-ment?). So I'll conclude thus. Given Cavell's transcendental-romantic sympathies (not least to the New England transcendendalists of the 19th century), and his particular indebtedness, recalling Schopenhauer's, to Kant, I sense that Poague's espousal of his (Cavell's) work isn't so far removed in spirit from my own of Schopenhauer's.[91] Perhaps the present article has been no more than a trailer.

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Notes

1. J. Barzun, "Romanticism", in Jack Sullivan (ed.), 'The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural' (1986), p. 357. Barzun sees the Romantic imagination as 'a window open on the infinite'.

2. G. Simenon, 'Act of Passion' (Penguin Books edition, 1965), p. 215.

3. L. Poague, "Engendering **Vertigo**", in 'Hitchcock Annual' (1994 edition), p. 35.

4. Poague's book, 'Another Frank Capra', was published in 1994.

5. See, for example, "Engendering ...", pp. 37, 36.

6. Ken Mogg, "The Fragments of the Mirror: **Vertigo** (1958) and its Sources", in 'The MacGuffin', no. 11 (November, 1993), pp. 7-22.

7. J. Jacobi, 'The Psychology of C.G. Jung' (1968), p. 124.

8. "Engendering ...", p. 49.

9. Ibid, pp. 27-28.

10. Ibid, p. 49.

11. S. Cavell, 'Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage' (1981), p. 2.

12. W. Rothman, 'The "I" of the Camera: Essays in Film Criticism, History, and Aesthetics' (1988), p. 152.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid. Cf Adrian Martin, "Luminous Alicia, Sore Devlin, Poor Alex: Around **Notorious** (1946)", in 'The MacGuffin', no. 10 (August, 1993), p. 17.

15. Rothman, p. 172.

16. "Engendering ...", p. 32.

17. Ibid, p. 35 (quoting Cavell's 'Pursuits of Happiness').

18. Ibid, p. 27.

19. B. Henderson, "Harvard Film Studies: A Review", in 'Film Quarterly', Summer 1982, p. 22.

20. Cavell, p. 241.

21. Kierkegaard recognised that his work and Schopenhauer's touched each other at 'many points', though he 'completely disagreed' with what Schopenhauer was saying! See Bryan Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 42n.

22. There's certainly more to Hegel's position than this!

23. Quoted by Magee, p. 42, to illustrate Schopenhauer's affinity with Kierkegaard in this matter at least.

24. See Michael Meyer, 'Ibsen' (Penguin Books edition, 1985), pp. 185, 841, 768.

25. Cavell, pp. 20-24. This particular rendering of the title of Ibsen's play is the one Cavell prefers.

26. "Engendering ...", p. 19.

27. K. Mogg, "The Man Who Knew Too Little: Hitchcock's **The Wrong Man** (1957)", in 'The MacGuffin', no. 6 (February, 1992), pp. 17-25. Recently I've revised and expanded this article for possible inclusion in a forthcoming Mensa anthology edited by Dr Geoffrey Marnell of Melbourne.

28. C. Birch, 'Regaining Compassion for Humanity and Nature' (1993), p. 223.

29. This passage was quoted in a review of Gay's book by Anthony Elliott, 'The Weekend Australian', 23-24 July, 1994. Mind you, Victorian attitudes to women probably weren't much different in the US (or in Ibsen's Norway, for that matter). Just read your Edith Wharton! Cf too a passage in John Buchan's 'Greenmantle' (1916), Chapter Sixteen, in which the American, Blenkiron, says, 'We've exalted our womenfolk into little tin gods, and at the same time left them out of the real business of life.'

30. Elliott, as above. Gay, of course, is a recent biographer of Freud.

31. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence From Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson' (Penguin Books edition, 1991), p. 257.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid, p. 256.

34. Ibid, pp. 254-55.

35. I say more about this aspect of **Vertigo** in 'MacGuffin' 11.

36. Again see 'MacGuffin' 11, which includes a discussion of how 'D'Entre les Morts' makes Flavières (the Scottie character) 'almost an artist'.

37. Paglia, p. 254.

38. Cf "Engendering ...", p. 36.

39. Ibid, p. 47.

40. I recognise that the terms themselves, as used in various contexts, imply what must be overcome. Nonetheless, my strong feeling is that Poague sees individual waves but not the sea - when really there's **only** the sea ...

41. Somebody once defined good writing as showing courtesy and consideration towards the reader. Now, while I find these two Harvard academics - Cavell and Rothman - often self-centred or arrogant (Cavell frequently has 'conversations with himself', as Tania Modleski noted recently), I consider Paglia the very model of a brilliant **communicator** on aesthetic matters. In short, a very good writer. Dr Paglia comes from Yale, by the way!

42. Elliott, op. cit. Anthony Elliott's book, 'Psychoanalytic Theory: an introduction', was recently published.

43. Paglia, p. 256.

44. "Engendering ...", p. 44.

45. I'm not even sure that Poague's description of the marvellous scene in the moonlight in Capra's film is fully accurate. (By the way, his **Vertigo** article doesn't elaborate at all on the passage I've quoted here.) For instance, what exactly is 'mysterious' about Mary's disappearance from her bathrobe, given that George's foot was resting on the robe's cord? I surmise that Poague is hinting that George's action wasn't entirely an accident! But, in that case, the epithet 'mysterious' is surely being stretched to breaking-point, if Poague intends using it to draw a connection with the ambience of **Vertigo**'s Muir Woods scene.

Anyway, my readers with a sense of humour may like to refer back to 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 7, which featured another instance of Poague's over-reaching in matters of interpretation (there, re the licence-plates on Marion Crane's car in **Psycho**). And cf note 87 below.

46. For a discussion of **Portrait of Jennie**, and its relation to **Vertigo**, see 'MacGuffin' 11.

47. "Engendering ...", p. 36.

48. Ibid, pp. 36-37.

49. Narcejac's 'Le Cas "Simenon"' was translated into English as 'The Art of Simenon' (1952). Its chapter called "Sympathy" includes this observation:

> It has never been sufficiently realised that Simenon's subjects are always drawn from those little news paragraphs which everyone ignores because their unhappy heroes end up at the Assizes. But Simenon tries to reconstitute the truly human origin of these pathetic dramas. He relives them in order to make us understand that they concern us, and that the accused man has often ventured further in his discovery of the human than those who condemn him. In this sense, each of Simenon's novels is a new 'Letter to my Judge'. By a natural development, sympathy, little by little, becomes

> much more than a method of knowing; it becomes transformed into a system of values. ... Thanks to this sympathy, Simenon reveals something of the world soul, the universal psyche. (pp. 31-32, 34)

50. Quoted on the back-cover of the Penguin edition of 'Act of Passion'. Cf the passage from the novel I've included at the head of the present article.

51. Simenon, p. 16. On p. 12, Alevoine had remarked, 'We are almost identical men, your Honour'.

52. Ibid, p. 22.

53. Ibid, p. 48.

54. Ibid, p. 94.

55. Ibid, p. 106.

56. Ibid, p. 107.

57. Ibid, p. 97 (cf p. 111). The man's name is Raoul Boquet, and he seems to be roughly the counterpart of Gévigne in 'D'Entre les Morts', and of Gavin Elster in **Vertigo.**

58. Ibid, p. 131.

59. Ibid.

Notes 60-91 will appear in 'MacGuffin' 18.

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ODD SPOT: UNSTINTING

John Houseman ('Unfinished Business', 1988) said of Alfred Hitchcock that he approached his work 'with an intelligence and an almost scientific clarity to which I was unaccustomed in the theatre'. A small instance of what Houseman may have meant can be glimpsed in Hitchcock's method for filming the Ernie's Restaurant sequence in **Vertigo** (1958).

An exact replica of that famous San Francisco meeting-place of the rich and famous was built in the Paramount studio in Hollywood. Everything in it was authentic, including the menus, ashtrays, napkins, matches, and rare antique plates and paintings. To give a further touch of realism, Hitchcock brought from San Francisco Roland and Vic Gotti, co-owners of Ernie's, and Carlo Doto, maître d' hôtel, to play themselves and to act as 'technical advisors' during shooting of the sequence.

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STOP PRESS. THIS SHOULD HAVE GONE IN 'BLOOPERS'. SAD TO REPORT, THERE MAY WELL BE NO EXTANT SCENARIO OF **THE MOUNTAIN EAGLE** - LET ALONE A PRINT OF THE FILM ITSELF - AFTER ALL. CF 'MACGUFFIN' 16, PP. 6-7. THE USE IN TRUFFAUT'S 'HITCHOCK' (ENGLISH VERSION) OF THE TERM 'SCENARIO' IS A SLOPPY TRANSLATION. IN THE ORIGINAL VERSION, TRUFFAUT SAYS, 'J'AI LA UN **RESUME** DU SCENARIO' (EMPHASIS ADDED). THANKS TO JOHN KUHNS FOR POINTING THIS OUT. MORE NEXT TIME.

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'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. For support, we thank both Richard Booth's Bookshop and the Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales. This issue printed by TS Press, Collingwood, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. FOR SUBS & BACK-ISSUES, SEE PP. 13-14 INSIDE.

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Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 18 | February-May 1996 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5 £3

EDITORIAL

Quite a short one. The reason for that has nothing to do with any lack of things to report. Read on, and you'll see. It's just that space is pressing as usual, and so we're going to rush out another 'MacGuffin' after this one to catch up.

Meanwhile, here's the gist of what's been happening. The reason that this issue is so late is that I've been trying to master both a computer and the Internet. This issue marks a transition to the computer-prepared publication that 'The MacGuffin' will be henceforth, all going well. Certainly we've already got our own site on the World Wide Web! Visit us soon, if you can, at this address: http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin ... (And note that~. It's crucial! My apologies to the Alfred Hitchcock Home Page whose address also includes a tilde, for which I managed to substitute a hyphen last time.)

Some exciting news. 'MacGuffin' reader J. Lary Kuhns of Los Angeles was prompted by Jenny Hammerton's article on Hitchcock's 'lost' film, **The Mountain Eagle** (1926), in 'MacGuffin' 16, to look around him. While he didn't find a print of the film, he did unearth nearly thirty stills from it. They were lying unsuspected in an archive of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Lary reported his find at last month's Hitchcock Conference in Texas, and in our next issue we'll reprint his paper in which he has attempted to recreate the plot of the film in detail. (We'll also report on the Conference itself.)

In this issue, Philip Kemp, whose book on Sir Michael Balcon is forthcoming, contributes "Hitching Posts". Philip's article looks at films by six 'Hitchcock imitators' - Michael Powell, Stanley Donen, Brian De Palma, Claude Chabrol, Henri-Georges Clouzot, and Nicholas Roeg - and draws some interesting conclusions. The other long article this time analyses Hitchcock's last 'silent' film, **The Manxman** (1929). In particular, it puts the film - which Hitchcock himself afterwards thought 'very banal' - in a poetic and melodramatic tradition reaching back at least as far as Alfred Lord Tennyson's narrative-poem, 'Enoch Arden' (1864).

Tina Kaufman's 'Oz-report' is held over to the next issue. But Tina features this time as one of our four experts who have nominated their best films of 1995. See the next page.

To everyone, good viewing.

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A TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR 'THE MACGUFFIN', ISSUES 13-16, IS INSIDE. SEPARATE COPIES OF IT WILL BE SENT ON REQUEST. SEE OUR REGULAR-MAIL AND EMAIL ADDRESSES ON THE BACK PAGE.

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Best Films of 1995

Most-mentioned films in the following lists are André Téchiné's **Les Roseaux Sauvages/Wild Reeds**, Boaz Yakin's **Fresh**, Nano Moretti's **Caro Diario/Dear Diary**, and Tim Burton's **Ed Wood**. Each film received three mentions out of a possible four. Thanks to our writers - all busy professionals - for again submitting lists this time. Without you ...

'Sunday Age' film critic Tom Ryan's list runs to exactly ten titles, as does Evan Williams's. (Evan writes on film for 'The Weekend Australian' and 'Quadrant'.) Let's start with those.

Tom's list (in order)

Smoke (Wayne Wang, Paul Auster, US)
Seven (David Fincher, US)
Nobody's Fool (Robert Benton, US)
The Bridges of Madison County (Clint Eastwood, US)
The City of Lost Children (Jeunet and Caro, France)
Babe (Chris Noonan, US)
Wild Reeds
The Madness of King George (Nicholas Hytner, UK)
Fresh (Boaz Yakin, US)
Vanya on 42nd Street

Evan's list (no particular order)

Wild Reeds (Andre Techine, France)
Vanya on 42nd Street (Louis Malle, US)
Ed Wood (Tim Burton, US)
Bullets Over Broadway (Woody Allen, US)
Little Women (Gillian Armstrong, US)
Carrington (Christopher Hampton, UK)
Caro Diario/Dear Diary (Nanni Moretti, Italy)
Le Colonel Chabert (Yves Angelo, France)
Apollo 13 (Ron Howard, US)
What Happened Was ... (Tom Noonan, US)

Next, Adrian Martin's list. Adrian is a film critic for the Melbourne 'Age'. His list includes some titles screened outside the mainstream, and at least one revival.

Adrian's list (in order)

1. La Naissance de l'amour/The Birth of Love
2. The Cloud-Capped Star (Ritwik Ghatak, 1960)
3. Caro Diario/Dear Diary
4. Underground (Emir Kusturica)
5. Ed Wood
6. U.S. Go Home (Claire Denis)
7. Latcho Drom (Tony Gatlif)
8. Crumb (Terry Zwigoff)
9. Terminal U.S.A. (Jon Moritsugu)
10. Les Roseaux Sauvages/Wild Reeds
11. The Big Bang (James Toback, 1990)
12. Fresh
13. El Espiritu de la Colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive (Victor Erice, 1973)
14. I Want to Go Home (Alain Resnais, 1989)
15. Like Air (Naomi Kawase)
16. Au Revoir/See You Later (Michael Snow, 1990)
17. All Good Things ... (feature-length finale of Star Trek: The Next Generation)

Finally, our columnist Tina Kaufman has sent us both her ten-best list of 1995 and two short lists of films that meant a lot to her (for one reason or another) ...

Tina's Top Ten Films (in alphabetical order):

The Bed You Sleep In (Jon Jost); **Burnt By the Sun** (Nikita Mikhalkov); **Caro Diario/Dear Diary**; **Clueless** (Amy Heckerling); **Crumb**; **Ed Wood**; **Fresh**; **Silences of the Palace** (Moufida Tlatli); **Underground**; **Under the Olive Trees** (Abbas Kiarostami).

'Three films that for me summed up the three Chinas':

Confucian Confusions, Edward Yang's urbane, witty comedy of Taiwanese yuppy angst; **Postman**, He Jianjun's sad, winter-toned tale of a Beijing postal delivery man who succumbs to interfering with the mail as his predecessor had done; and **Love in the Time of Twilight**, Tsui Hark's enchanting Hong Kong ghost movie that mixes time-travel, slapstick, monsters and romance in an increasingly frenetic tale that, arguably, has a lot of the charm of **Celine and Julie Go Boating**.

'Special pleasures'

The silent films screened in the MCA's 'Sublime Silents' program,[1] including Murnau's **Faust**, Garbo in

The Kiss, the Italian **Maciste in Hell**, and, most especially, Mizoguchi's **The Water Magician** accompanied by a **benshi**, the traditional performer who spoke and explained the lines of silent films - Midori Sawato's incredible vocal performance, though naturally it was in Japanese, added immeasurably to the experience; the weird, murky, sepia-toned dreamworld of **The Kingdom**; the delicate and intensely personal recording of her search for the father she'd hardly known by young Japanese documentarist Ni Tsutsumarete, in **Like Air** (at the Documentary Conference); and **The Story of Harry Dare**, a sweet and knockabout Australian film about a casual young Aboriginal father getting to know his son through shared detective work.

1. Editor's note. The MCA is the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

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Hitching Posts

'When a director ... sets out to make a thriller or a suspense picture,' wrote François Truffaut, introducing his classic book-length interview with Hitchcock, 'you may be certain that in his heart of hearts he is hoping to live up to one of Hitchcock's masterpieces.'[1] And even if he (or she) isn't, you can be pretty sure that's what the producers - and the critics - are hoping for, given the freedom with which the term 'Hitchcockian' is slung around. (Even as I write, Taylor Hackford's routinely competent **Dolores Claiborne** is being touted as 'The best psychological thriller Hitchcock never made'.) There's only one way to make a thriller, would seem to be the implicit message, and if you ain't doing it Hitch's way, you ain't doing it right.

Of course that isn't so, and never was. **Pace** Truffaut, there are plenty of other ways: nothing very Hitchcockian, after all, about **The Usual Suspects**, strong front-runner for thriller of the year. Still, from the mid-30s onwards there's been no shortage of recognisably 'school of Hitchcock' movies - many of them, inevitably, sporting all the originality of a fake Rolex. But Hitchcockian elements have been adopted and creatively reworked by filmmakers as distinctive, and as diverse, as Roeg, Clouzot and Michael Powell, whose ventures into this field call in question the further implication of Truffaut's statement: that even if you do opt for the path of the Master, the best you can hope for is to 'live up to' him. That anyone should contrive to out-Hitch him at his own game is clearly unthinkable.

To check how far this assumption is justified - and since it would take a book just to list all the 'school of Hitch' movies, let alone analyse them - I've opted to concentrate on six films that seem to offer good scope for comparison. Two of them are French, two British and two American: in chronological order, **Contraband** (1940), **Les Diaboliques** (1955), **Charade** (1963), **Le Boucher**(1969), **Don't Look Now** (1973) and **Obsession** (1976). What's at once noticeable is that, different though they all are, the traits they have in common cut across national boundaries. Powell/Pressburger and Donen are the jokers; Chabrol shares with De Palma a mood of doomed romantic melancholy; and of Clouzot's film and Roeg's, it would be hard to say which is the scarier. Yet each takes Hitchcock as a jumping-off point and more than one of them sets out to do things that he wouldn't, or maybe couldn't, do.

* * *

Michael Powell had watched Hitchcock at work (he was stills photographer on such Hitchcock silents as **Champagne** and **The Manxman**) and described him as 'the most inventive, mischievous, inspiring hobgoblin in movies ... the eternal Cockney barrowboy who knows it all'.[2] Powell was no Cockney, but there's a certain cocky knowingness - and a good deal of mischief - about **Contraband**. It was his second film with Emeric Pressburger; their first, **The Spy in Black** (1939), had teamed Conrad Veidt with Valerie Hobson. Both pairings had struck sparks off each other and at the box office; **Contraband** was a frankly opportunistic bid to repeat the formula. Veidt plays the skipper of a Danish freighter detained by British Contraband Control for inspection; Hobson is a contrary-minded passenger who jumps ship and heads for London. Pursuing her, Veidt discovers she's a British agent: there are stage-Nazis, punch-ups and shoot-outs in the blackout, and all ends with a clinch. It was, Powell noted, 'pure corn, but corn served up by professionals'.[3]

It was also a shameless grab-bag of Hitchcockian motifs, most of them lifted from the run of six Gaumont-British thrillers, from **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934) to **The Lady Vanishes** (1938), that had

secured Hitchcock's international fame. The villains run a cinema as cover for their operation, just like Verloc in **Sabotage**; there's a stagy blackface act straight out of **Young and Innocent**; as in **The Lady Vanishes**, the plot hinges on a musical clue. Studied Hitchcockian quirkeries abound, like the showdown amidst a roomful of unsaleable busts of Neville Chamberlain, or the bowler-hatted little man planted stolidly between the sparring Veidt and Hobson on a bus, and the film even boasts its own MacGuffin, a cigarette paper listing the names of disguised German warships.

And throughout, **Contraband** slily apes Hitchcock's taste for setting up an erotic tension, spiced with kinkiness, between his lead actors. From their first clash when she refuses to wear a life-jacket (something of a bondage garment in itself) the exchanges between Veidt and Hobson quiver with hints of S/M games. 'Mrs Sörensen,' he growls, provoked by her wide-eyed insolence, 'have you ever been put in irons?' When they're tied up together by the heavies (shades of the handcuffed Donat and Carroll in **The 39 Steps**)[4] he works his way free, warning as he tugs at the ropes, 'I shall hurt you.' 'Go ahead,' she murmurs.

Where **Contraband** parts company with its models is in its documentary strain. Hitchcock, as befitted a director who scorned plausibility, had scant interest in documentary, but Powell is clearly fascinated no less by the workings of British Contraband Control than by the eerie world of London in the blackout. The blackout element works fine, heightening the fantasy mood of the London scenes (the film was retitles **Blackout** for its US release), but the bureaucratic comings and goings clog the action badly for the first twenty minutes. Also, Powell enjoyed eccentric actors, which Hitchcock scarcely did. (Witness Hitch's palpable unease with Alistair Sim and Joyce Grenfell in **Stage Fright** and his abdication in the face of Laughton's **Jamaica Inn** barnstorming.) Evidently much amused, Powell overindulges Hay Petrie in his double role, playing off the short fussy Petrie against Veidt's craggy, towering presence. It's fun, but it dissipates the tension.

By the mid-30s, Hitchcock had perfected his supreme trick: his ability to screw up the suspense, then grin in our faces - and **still** keep us on the edge of our seats. In his work from **The Man Who Knew Too Much** onwards, as Peter John Dyer put it, 'terror and levity rub shoulders'.[5] **Contraband** has plenty of levity, but not much terror. The blackout scenes point the way: expressionist high fantasy was where Powell/Pressburger's interests lay, and not until **The Small Back Room** would they prove that they too - in their own very un-Hitchcockian style - could be masters of suspense.

* * *

Stanley Donen comes far closer to bringing off the terror/levity trick. Remarkably close, in fact, given that **Charade** was his first shot at the thriller genre. Unashamedly setting up an **homage**, Donen kicks off with Saul Bass-style credits (a deft pastiche by Paul Binder) leading into an Alpine ski-slope scene that reworks the opening of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (British version). And having cast Cary Grant, one of Hitchcock's two favourite male leads,[6] Donen plays mix-and-match with all four of Hitch's Grant films: **North by Northwest** mostly, but with chunks of **Suspicion**, **Notorious** and **To Catch a Thief** stirred in.

'What has long been disturbing in Hitchcock's films,' Andrew Sarris noted, ' - the perverse ironies, the unresolved ambiguities, the switched protagonists - now marks him as a pioneer in the modern idiom in which nothing is what it seems on the surface.'[7] Donen too captures this sense of pervasive unease, of a jokey facade stretched thin over betrayal and desolation. As often with Hitchcock (**Blackmail**, **Sabotage**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, etc.), the ostensible 'happy ending' dissolves on scrutiny into something more disturbing: the heroine (Audrey Hepburn at her most appealingly vulnerable) has merely passed from the arms of one compulsive liar to those of another. 'With Charles,' she muses on her failed marriage, 'everything is secrecy and lies.' But the same is true, doubled and in spades, of Grant, who switches names and personalities with alarming fluency, and her final glad cry as she falls into his embrace, 'Oh I love you, Adam Alex Peter Brian, whatever your name is!' prompts the thought: how many more of him are there, and just how lovable will they all be?

Where **Charade** scores over **Contraband** is in deftly running these bleaker intimations in tandem with its light-hearted elements, using humour to tighten the mood rather than defuse it. Like Hitchcock at his best, Donen tosses in small offkey details - the police inspector with his nail-scissors, the twitchy little villain subject to compulsive sneezing - that at once tease and disquiet us. He can match his

mentor for sadistic glee, as well. There's a ripe comedy-of-public-embarrassment scene involving Grant, an orange and an outraged buxom lady; two minutes later, Hepburn is 'put through it' as callously as any of Hitch's cool blondes, with James Coburn's folksily menacing Tex Penthollow cornering her in a phone booth to drop lighted matches down her front. Once again, the lead relationship is spiced with sadism, physical no less than psychological: Grant openly delights in keeping Hepburn scared out of her wits, and at one point threatens her with a spanking.[8]

For all its dark undertones, **Charade** is an exhilarating experience. There's a dancing lightness about the camerawork, a throwaway elegance in the handling of the actors, that reminds us Donen cut his teeth on Gene Kelly musicals. Could Hitchcock have directed a musical? The nearest he got to it was the 1933 Straussian confection **Waltzes from Vienna**, and his loathing for that dire assignment throbs through every frame. But it would be special pleading to claim that **Charade**, to any serious degree, ever transcends its reputation as 'the best comedy thriller Hitchcock never made'. Stylish, witty and accomplished, Donen's film could scarcely be bettered as an affectionate salute to the Master, but ultimately it exists wholly within Hitchcock's shadow.

* * *

If **Charade** was unashamedly copying Hitchcock, no one thought the worse of Donen for it. The response to **Obsession**, though, dealt Brian De Palma's critical standing a blow from which it's yet to recover. Not only was this upstart movie brat ripping off the great Hitch, snarled the reviewers, but he was doing it ineptly; his film was slow, arty, pretentious, utterly lacking in Hitchcockian pace and bite. From now on, the dismissive term 'derivative' would hover over De Palma's head like a small travelling thundercloud.

Two decades on, though, the puzzling thing is how **Obsession** ever got taken for a 'Hitchcockian thriller' in the first place. True, it borrows the theme of **Vertigo** - a man haunted by the memory of a lost love who tries to remodel another woman into her image - but does so like a composer writing 'Variations on a Theme of'. Whatever he may have done subsequently, in **Obsession** De Palma is no more trying to be Hitchcock than Rachmaninov was trying to be Paganini. Part of the blame may lie with the Columbia publicists who, perhaps befuddled by the involvement of Bernard Herrmann, rambled on about 'crackling suspense'.[9] There's precious little of that in **Obsession**, but then on all the evidence there was hardly meant to be. Instead, the film floats in its own dreamlike, overheated melancholia. The contrast between the two films' main action set-pieces is indicative: Scottie (James Stewart) is traumatically present at Madeleine's death, while Michael (Cliff Robertson) simply watches from a distance as cops and crooks, equally inept, make a catastrophic botch-up of the kidnap/rescue.

The impression of a thriller perversely played out in slow-motion is enhanced by De Palma's timescale. Barring the odd flashback, Hitchcock never splits his films over time: most of them cover a few weeks, **Vertigo** a year or so. **Obsession** stretches over 16 years - partly a plot necessity, of course, to allow Michael's daughter time to grow up into her mother's double, but also a reflection of the film's languorous mood. San Francisco vs New Orleans; necrophilia vs incest; one could set up a whole string of cool/steamy opposites between Hitchcock's film and De Palma's. The contrast between the two Herrmann scores sums it up. Where **Vertigo**'s mode is high and remote, poised around flute, harp and vibraphone, **Obsession** is dominated by the dark, chthonic outpourings of the organ, edging it towards De Palma's home territory of the horror genre.

Obsession is an ill-starred film: even sympathetic critics seem to have trouble seeing it straight. In his book on De Palma, Michael Bliss describes the hero at the end as 'happy again after all those miserable years'.[10] The reading's hard to sustain, given Robertson's expression of anguish in his fiancee/daughter's embrace - the look of a man desperate to make love to the one woman who's utterly barred to him. Earlier on, there's what sounds like a plea for the film to be taken on its own terms, not just as ersatz Hitchcock. When Michael first meets his reincarnated love, she's restoring a fresco in the same Florentine church where he met his wife. She explains that another painting's been revealed under the one she's working on, posing a dilemma: 'Should they destroy a great painting to uncover what appears to be a crude first draft, or should they restore the original but never know for sure what lies beneath it?' There may be a covert reference here to Paul Schrader's original script, in which Michael goes to jail for killing his partner, his daughter is driven mad, and they meet again 25 years later, broken and desolate, after their respective releases. By all accounts it was Herrmann who talked De Palma and Schrader out of what would surely have been a still less Hitchcockian film.

* * *

As it stands, the least successful element in **Obsession** is the denouement; clumsy and undermotivated, it risks turning the film into a crass whodunit. Hitchcock famously disliked whodunits - 'Like a jigsaw or a crossword puzzle. No emotion' -[11] and it's a great strength of Chabrol's **Le Boucher** that right from the start it's clear who the killer is. Though Chabrol pitches a curve ball or two (such as the lost-and-found lighter) to keep us alert, we're never in much doubt that Popaul, the likable village butcher brutalised by his father and by 15 years in the Army, is behind the serial killings of local young women. The tension of **Le Boucher** doesn't lie in **who**, or even much in **why**, but in watching realisation seep into and corrode the central relationship - just as it does in the film's closest counterpart in the Hitchcock canon.

In the pioneering study of Hitchcock he wrote with Eric Rohmer, Chabrol identified as a key Hitchcockian theme the 'exchange of guilt'.[12] The theme's at its clearest in **Strangers on a Train** (source of Chabrol's cigarette-lighter motif) but it's also central to **Shadow of a Doubt** - set, like **Le Boucher**, in a small and vividly-evoked rural community.[13] And there are close affinities between Joseph Cotten's Uncle Charlie and Jean Yanne's Popaul, both bitter and misanthropic behind their affable facades. 'Do you know the world is a foul sty?' asks Charlie, echoed by Popaul's comment that the local people are a good lot, 'not like the shits you meet everywhere else'.[14] But while Charlie kills for sadistic pleasure and financial gain, Popaul (like Peter Lorre in Lang's **M**) kills in anguished compulsion, trapped in a mist of blood. 'I can't help myself,' he tells Helène, the schoolmistress (Stéphane Audran), 'it's like a nightmare.'

Where **Le Boucher** elaborates - and arguably improves on - its prototype is in its handling of the 'exchange of guilt'. In **Shadow** young Charlie (Teresa Wright) intuits her uncle's guilt but can't bring herself to denounce him. Her complicity lies in shared knowledge, no more. Helène is drawn in deeper. Her cool Parisian chic fascinates Popaul, who with touching awkwardness declares his attraction. She rejects him; she has had an unhappy affair and doesn't want to 'take any more risks'. At the climax he confronts her and confesses, knife in hand, then turns it on himself. Weeping, Helène drives him to the hospital; as his lifeblood leaks away he tells her, 'I would have liked to be with you always. ... When you were there, I didn't think about blood.' Had she been prepared to give herself, she might have saved him - and his victims.

Le Boucher delivers on suspense, all right: the sequence when Helène scurries desperately round the schoolhouse locking every door, only to realise that Popaul has still gained entry, scores high on the nailbiting scale. But Chabrol has the audacity to follow this climax with the long, tender, agonisingly slow death scene, all the more moving for its verbal formality: even at this extremity the two address each other as 'vous', and Popaul's dying cry is not 'Helène' but 'Mademoiselle Helène'. In the fatal stabbing of a flawed, remorseful hero there may be a side-glance at **Sabotage**, but nothing there nor in **Shadow of a Doubt** can match the complex, visceral emotions of **Le Boucher**'s final minutes.

* * *

Given that Chabrol is widely considered a 'cold' director, **Le Boucher** is notable for the warmth and compassion of its regard. There's little of either, though, in the pitiless gaze of Henri-Georges Clouzot. In **Les Diaboliques**, observed a contemporary critic, everything is 'unwholesome, tacky, foul and tainted,'[15] and the sole character with any redeeming traits is precisely the one (played by Vera Clouzot, wife of the director) who gets destroyed. What gives the film its lasting fascination - it's just been re-released, and a Hollywood remake is on the way - is the satisfaction Clouzot so patently derives from his sordid world and the creatures who crawl about in it. Hitchcock's often been accused of misanthropy, but Clouzot makes him look like both Cheeryble brothers [characters in Dickens's 'Nicholas Nickleby' - ed.!] rolled into one.

Clouzot himself acknowledged his affinities with Hitchcock. 'We have preoccupations in common - notably a taste for certain physically violent elements.' Source material in common, too - **Les Diaboliques** is adapted from a novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, whose 'D'entre les morts' (From the Dead) furnished the plot of **Vertigo**. As a title, 'From the Dead' would have fitted **Les Diaboliques** just as well. Michel, the sadistic head of a private school near Paris, tyrannises both his wife and his mistress. Making common cause, they murder him. But the body vanishes, and there are intimations that

Michel's still around. Finally he resurrects, horrifyingly, causing his wife's weak heart to give out - just as he and his mistress had planned it.

The cruel spiderweb of Clouzot's plot links it to **Vertigo**, though in its depiction of a petty, malicious suburban world the film recalls a lesser-known Hitchcock movie, the sardonic 1932 comedy **Rich and Strange**. But in mood and structure **Les Diaboliques** anticipates **Psycho**, not only for its steadily mounting sense of half-glimpsed horror, but for the way the strings of the action are pulled by a person - Michel, Mrs Bates - who's at once alive and dead. Both films keep their secrets to the last, with no **Vertigo**-style mid-way revelation; indeed Clouzot's final appeal to his audience not to give away the twist may well have inspired Hitchcock's publicity coup of banning late-comers from showings of **Psycho**.

According to Roy Armes, it's Clouzot's 'lack of humour' that 'differentiates him most strongly from his only serious rival as master of the thriller genre - Alfred Hitchcock'.[17] The point's disputable. Clouzot's humour is certainly of a very different brand to Hitchcock's, with not a trace of playfulness. Yet if there's little levity, there's a sardonic smile detectable behind several scenes - as when, to satisfy Michel's penny-pinching regime, boys and staff alike are dished up rotted fish for lunch. The incident's all the more pointed for its setting: the snarly ambiance of the school dining-room is exactly captured. It's through such richness of detail that Clouzot, a master at creating atmosphere, builds his effects; compare the opening scenes of **Le Salaire de la peur** (one of the greatest of all suspense films, though utterly un-Hitchcockian) where the dust and sweat and sour smell of defeat are so vivid we can taste them. Hitchcock, like the sketch artist he used to be, can fill in a background with a few bold strokes - fast, economical and quite sufficient for his purpose. But Clouzot gives us a whole shabby world, compelling in its harsh moral construction.

* * *

Don't Look Now also creates its own all-pervading atmosphere, though Nicholas Roeg's style is very different from Clouzot's and Hitchcock's. His fractured, complex editing technique switches us back and forward, hinting at links and correspondences that may exists only in his characters' minds - or in ours. In his own way, while seeming to leave us scope to make our own connections, Roeg teases and manipulates his audience no less than Hitchcock, tantalising us (along with John Baxter, the bereaved father played by Donald Sutherland) with glimpses and half-grasped images to lure us into the film's emotional and physical labyrinth. **Don't Look Now** deftly juggles ideas of perception, of vision and blindness, reflection and prevision. Yet at the same time, for all its ludic virtuosity, the film taps into deep emotions - deeper perhaps than Hitchcock generally cares to go. Hitch gives us the scream of terror, sure enough, but rarely the howl of grief.

Like **Les Diaboliques**, **Don't Look Now** connects with Hitchcock via its source material, being drawn (as were **Jamaica Inn**, **Rebecca** and **The Birds**) from a tale by Daphne du Maurier. Though its theme - the influence over the living of a dead person who returns in malign guise - links it with **Rebecca** (and with **Vertigo** and **Psycho**), it shares with **The Birds** a location in du Maurier's favourite territory, the almost-supernatural - stories where things happen on the borderline, nearly but not quite explicable in rational terms. We're never sure how far Baxter has foreseen, or even unknowingly willed, his own death, any more than we're sure whether Melanie (Tippi Hedren) in some way attracts the birds' attacks.

Where **Don't Look Now** differs from **The Birds** - and, I'd venture to say, from most other Hitchcock films - is in swinging us through a far wider trajectory of emotions. Roeg's film doesn't lack humour (the gloomy, black-bearded hotel manager could almost be, as Neil Sinyard suggests, 'a forerunner of John Cleese's Basil Fawlty')[18] nor sex: the bedroom scene between Sutherland and Julie Christie is deservedly famous for its frank sensuality. As for tension, the climactic sequence in which Baxter tracks the small, red-hooded figure he takes for his dead daughter through the haunted back alleys of dank, wintry Venice matches any in the history of cinema.

Yet it's worth pausing over that sequence, since what it gives us goes beyond a mood of encroaching menace and the chilling moment when the figure turns to reveal a grotesque, ancient dwarf with cleaver upraised. Suspense and terror, yes, but also pity - not just for Baxter, but for his killer, whom we have heard sobbing piteously, and who comes towards him pathetically shaking her head as if to say 'Why are you making me do this?' There's a sense of the absurd, too: the last line of du Maurier's story is '"Oh God," he thought, "What a bloody silly way to die ..."', a notion brilliantly conveyed by Sutherland

without words. These and a score of other emotions, complex and contradictory, are packed into the scene, along with an intricate montage of visual and aural motifs - blood, bells, water, broken glass - from elsewhere in the film. In its richness and resonance, it's at once the most moving and the most satisfying conclusion to any of Roeg's works.

* * *

Hitchcock was rightly proud of **Psycho**, noting that the audience was aroused not by a message or a great performance, but 'by pure film'.[19] This distilling art - the ability to create pure film, to evoke the concentrated essence of suspense or terror, nowhere more effectively than in **Psycho** - is Hitchcock's strength but maybe also his limitation. While his status as the Master of Suspense rests unchallenged, it's a status within a self-chosen, circumscribed field. His films operate with a high degree of technical complexity, but within a relatively narrow emotional range.

Buttoned-up, sober-suited, addicted to set routines, Hitchcock notoriously feared disorder. Making films, one suspects, was a means of controlling disorder, containing it safely within his ironic, multilayered artifices, his Piranesian prisons of the imagination. For it's the floppier, more disorderly emotions - grief, compassion, tenderness, even happiness - that rarely figure in his films. It could be argued that they don't figure much, or even really fit, in the suspense-thriller genre as a whole, where sharper sensations like fear and anger are at home. **Le Boucher** and **Don't Look Now**, though, offer evidence to the contrary.

No filmmaker, needless to say, can emulate Hitchcock in everything, and anyone who tries to ends up, like Donen, making at best a witty facsimile of the Master's work. But Chabrol and Roeg show it's possible to make 'Hitchcockian thrillers' that not only live up to the key qualities of their models, but also move into areas beyond Hitchcock's chosen range. And then, of course, there are those intriguingly hybrid films that meld Hitchcockian elements with conventions derived from other genres and other filmmakers altogether: Mankiewicz's **Five Fingers** (Hitchcock meets Lubitsch), or Katherine Bigelow's remarkable new film **Strange Days** (Hitchcock/Hawks/Ridley Scott). But to explore that field would need another article - at least.

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Notes

1. François Truffaut, 'Hitchcock', London 1968, pp. 18-19

2. Michael Powell, 'A Life in Movies', London 1986, p. 183

3. Powell, p. 339

4. Charles Laughton's wicked squire in **Jamaica Inn** also derives pleasure from binding and gagging the heroine, 'in a bondage ... which is by far the most romantically expressed emotion in the film'. (Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock', London 1974, p. 165)

5. Peter John Dyer, "Young and Innocent", 'Sight and Sound', Spring 1961, p. 82

6. The other was James Stewart; both he and Grant starred in four Hitchcock films each. Donen follows Hitch in using Grant's screen persona to reassure us that, no matter what perils supervene, there'll be a happy ending.

7. Andrew Sarris, "The Director's Game", 'Film Culture', Summer 1961, p. 76

8. There may be a sly dig here at Grant's personal tastes. His fourth wife, Dyan Cannon, divorcing him in 1968 on grounds of cruelty, testified that he liked to spank her.

9. Columbia press handout, undated.

10. Michael Bliss, 'Brian De Palma', Metuchen NJ/London 1983, p. 48

11. Truffaut, p. 60

12. Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, 'Hitchcock', Paris 1957, pp. 78, 110-112

13. Chabrol went further than Hitchcock in evoking spirit of place by casting all but three of his roles from the people of the Perigord village of Trémolat where the film was shot.

14. 'Ils sont bons, les gens du Bourras, à côté des ordures qu'on rencontre partout.' English-subtitled prints of **Le Boucher** emasculate this line to 'The people are nice here, much nicer than elsewhere.'

15. 'Tout y est malsain, poisseux, vil ou taré.' Gilbert Salachas, 'Téléciné' no. 237, quoted in Philippe Pilard, 'Henri-Georges Clouzot', Paris 1969, p. 155

16. José-Louis Bocquet and Marc Godin, 'Henri-Georges Clouzot cinéaste', Sèvres 1993, p. 89. The killing of Michel in **Les Diaboliques** is graphically messy and long-drawn-out. Hitchcock may have recalled it when he came to the death of the East German agent, Gromek, in **Torn Curtain**.

17. Roy Armes, 'French Cinema since 1946', London/New Jersey 1966, p. 78

18. Neil Sinyard, 'The Films of Nicholas Roeg', London 1991, p. 49

19. Truffaut, p. 233

[Editor's note. Philip Kemp's article is being published jointly by 'The MacGuffin' and by 'Metro', the journal of the Australian Teachers of Media. 'Metro' appears 5 times a year, and subscriptions are welcomed. Individual rates are $50 (Australian readers), $60 (New Zealand) and $100 (elsewhere). There are also rates for institutions and for students/unemployed. Back-issues are available. Write to 'Metro', C/- ATOM, P.O. Box 222, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia.]

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Silent Document: Hitchcock's 'The Manxman' (1929)

Hitchcock, as befitted a director who scorned plausibility, had scant interest in documentary.

- Philip Kemp

'But what is the Manx poet saying, sir? "I have no will but Thine, O God." That's me, sir, truth enough.'

- Pete, in 'The Manxman' (the novel)[1]

'Pete, we too have suffered.'

- Kate, in **The Manxman** (film)

[S]everal men ... were asked to describe an elephant in the dark. One, touching his trunk, said 'this animal is like a water pipe'; another, touching his ear, said 'this animal is like a fan'; a third, touching his legs, described the animal as a pillar.

- Erich Fromm, 'The Art of Loving'[2]

The whole picture

Elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', we print Philip Kemp's exemplary "Hitching Posts". Philip's main criticism of Hitchcock's films, after allowing for their 'high degree of technical complexity', is that they operate 'within a relatively narrow emotional range'. In particular, they lack many of 'the floppier, more disorderly emotions - grief, compassion, tenderness, even happiness'. Perhaps you'll agree with me that the point deserves to be made, yet needs qualifying.

For a start, how far does an absence of floppier emotions matter? Shouldn't we be gratified that emotion of **some** kind, a most palpable kind, was always Hitchcock's stock-in-trade, and that the results were so consistently entertaining? Besides, even if other directors' films are often 'warmer' or more 'optimistic' than Hitchcock's, can any of them be said to give 'the whole picture'? Contrariwise, don't Hitchcock's films show a greater amount of the whole picture than is often thought?

Take **Marnie** (1964). In my view, only Robin Wood[3] has come close in print to giving us a true measure of its 'masterpiece' status. Other commentators, like Robert Kapsis,[4] when they're not repulsed (it may seem) by how the main character is just an uptight commercial secretary, tend to dismiss both the screenplay and the direction as shoddy. By implication, the film can have few of the finer emotions, nor even much technical complexity. And that's nonsense! For a quite small intimation of the technical complexity of **Marnie**, see my article on **Spellbound** in 'MacGuffin' 15. As for the film's subject, I think that's both unusual and important: the subject is surely loneliness. More broadly, it's about suffering. The film examines what it means to be alone in the universe, and it tells us finally that that's what we all are. At the end of Philip Kemp's "Hitching Posts" article, he mentions Joseph Mankiewicz's **Five Fingers** (1952). Well, I suspect **Marnie** borrowed its suspenseful cleaning-lady scene from that film, and yet it easily accommodates the material to a vision and purpose of its own, which is certainly **not** lacking either compassion or tenderness. After all, the cleaning lady in **Marnie** is a surrogate for Marnie's mother, even Marnie herself.

Again, I congratulate Philip on his article's scope and good sense, two things that often seem to be missing from **academic** Hitchcock interpretation! Yet I think he pays a price for those qualities. A practising British critic, a very good one, he's still for all that basically an 'empiricist', one who tends to set a collection of enduring half-truths above new insight. Philip says that by the 1930s 'Hitchcock had perfected his supreme trick', and he quotes erstwhile 'Sight & Sound' writer, Peter John Dyer, on how that trick consisted of making '"terror and levity rub shoulders"'. Okay, I agree that's a neat phrase to describe the style of Hitchcock's Gaumont thrillers. And indeed the same terror-levity trick had been mastered by Hitchcock's predecessor, Charles Dickens (1812-70), whose boldly melodramatic novels often mix a child's and an adult's perspectives to quite startling and/or comic effect. Only, in neither artist's case, does that trick more than begin to define his genius.

Put the matter this way. Frankly, when I nowadays watch a Hitchcock film, I no longer feel either terror or much levity! Rather, I try to appreciate what I've already called the films' vision, and how its various parts work together. In other words, I enjoy seeing how the **many** melodramatic and stylistic devices of which Hitchcock was capable all serve that vision. A device that I might even rate above Hitchcock's conspicuous wit and capacity for being outrageous is simply his attention to detail. Who was it that defined genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains?[5] Anyway, I feel it's significant that in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1942) Hitchcock makes his dandified villain, Uncle Charlie, boast of his attention to '**all** the little details'!

Further, I think we **know** that Hitchcock designed his films to one day be appreciated in just this way, for their comprehensiveness and accuracy. On the one hand, he strove to include everything needful. Hence for a long time one of his pet projects was to emulate Walter Ruttman's **Berlin** (1927), and film 24 hours in the life of a city.[6] In part-realisation of that goal, he eventually made **Frenzy** (1972). And of **Rear Window** (1954), he told Truffaut that its impact would have been much less without the representative cross-section of characters we see living in the apartments opposite Jeff's.[7] Equally, Hitchcock nearly always paid close attention to matters of verisimilitude, including the smallest details. Once, he went so far as to say that he would like to make documentaries.[8] So it's interesting to note a report in the 1995-96 'Hitchcock Annual', in which author and screenwriter Evan Hunter reminisces about the time he worked with Hitchcock on **The Birds** (1963):

> He was meticulous about the circumstances in the script. There are holes you could drive Mack trucks through in some thrillers. He said in my films I'd like to think that if you'd reel it back you'd say, 'Oh, yeah, there it is.' Nowadays of course we can do that through video replay.[9]

In sum, in the rest of this article on **The Manxman**, I want to test two of Philip Kemp's claims: first, that Hitchcock's films operate 'within a relatively narrow emotional range' and, second, that Hitchcock 'scorned plausibility' and therefore 'had scant interest in documentary'.

Ecumenical

The Manxman, Hitchcock's last silent film, is based on Hall Caine's best-selling novel (1894), which in turn clearly derives its plot from Tennyson's narrative-poem 'Enoch Arden' (1864). All three works are melodramatic. I don't mean that as a criticism. Of course, there **were** bad melodramas, and indeed the Hall Caine novel strikes me as too solemn and verbose to be considered a superior work; yet, as a popular form, melodrama at its best has always had much to be said for it. Moreover, the cinema owes it a huge debt. That's a likely reason why several excellent studies of melodrama have appeared in recent years. For example, you can read a spirited short defence of the form in the 1973 monograph, 'Melodrama', by James L. Smith.

Professor Russell Merritt cites Smith's work, and related ones such as Peter Brooks's 'The Melodramatic Imagination' (1976), in a helpful article he contributed in 1983 to 'Wide Angle'. The article, called "Melodrama: Postmortem for a Phantom Genre",[10] suggests why in the 19th century both the novel and the theatre drew on real-life matters. Such matters were seen to be instructive. Novels might, in the words of Mary McCarthy, give '"explanations of the way institutions and industries work, how art is collected, political office is bought"', while stage plays 'were valued' (says Merritt) 'for detailed verisimilitude in decor, dialect, quaint customs and other matters of local colour'.[11] Well, Hall Caine's 'The Manxman' provides most of those things, at times (for a modern reader) excessively and tiresomely. By the same token, I must say that the novel's attempt to be comprehensive in something **more** than matters of detail is impressive. In the way its story, which is set on the Isle of Man, spans several generations of descendants of Old Deemster Christian of Ballawhaine, it may remind you of some of the novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). There's a similar earnest purpose and temporal sweep.

Hitchcock's film-version reduces the story's time-scale but keeps its poetic spirit. The credits are superimposed on a shot of waves breaking against a particularly jagged rock. Likewise, Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' begins:

> Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ...

Then follows in the film what is a **typical** Hitchcock documentary passage (cf early sequences in **The Lodger**, **The Ring**, **Champagne**, **Blackmail**, **Topaz** and **Frenzy**). The Manx herring fleet is arriving back

safely in the port of Peel. Pete Quilliam (Carl Brisson), a fisherman, waves from his boat to his buddy, the lawyer Philip Christian (Malcolm Keen), who is standing on the quay. Pete and other members of the crew lower and furl a sail. As the shot dissolves, he leaps over the sail, now wrapped around its spar. In the next shot, the boat has tied up, and Pete is hurling fish onto the quay with his bare hands. In the foreground, another fisherman is already cutting up and filleting the catch.

Here, and in a couple of later sequences, there's an evocation of the same sort of isolated fishing town - Bodega Bay in Northern California - that Hitchcock featured in **The Birds**. Equally, the look and feel of this opening sequence may remind you that 1929 was the very year that John Grierson coined the term 'documentary' to describe his two-reeler about Britain's herring fleet, **Drifters**. And I don't think it detracts from the parallel I'm making to note that Hitchcock reportedly shot only two scenes of his film on the Isle of Man itself.[12] Rather, we've come to the crux of the matter. I'd begin by saying that Hitchcock's melodramatic films indeed embrace a kind of documentary, but a kind conceived on a vaster scale than Grierson's: they're 'documentaries' about, firstly, the film audience, and then, finally, about what Tennyson in 'Enoch Arden' calls in ecumenical terms

> That, which being everywhere
> Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone ...

That is, they're about the workings of what the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) called, more mundanely, the world's Will.[13]

Then I'd add this. Given that Hitchcock's concern as a filmmaker was to be comprehensive, it follows that the films themselves are concerned with all levels of reality, and work accordingly. Just one of those levels is the straight factual one traditionally assigned to documentary. It's even **imperative** of Hitchcock's films that they begin to work at that level. Thus their various courtroom scenes would be weakened without a veracity of detail. Consider the climax of **The Manxman**, which I'll discuss later, showing Phil presiding in his new appointment as Deemster, i.e. Judge, of the Manx Court: that's a detail fully as localised as the cassocked priests seen walking the streets of Quebec City in the 1952 **I Confess**.[14] Or think of the exact replication of the main courtroom of London's Old Bailey, even down to scratches on its woodwork, for the filming of **The Paradine Case** (1947).[15]

I can focus what I've just said by mentioning two more details taken from the start of **The Manxman**. That the film will be about something very like what Schopenhauer called Will is immediately indicated by the credits-shot of breaking waves. I've discussed the sea-symbolism of Hitchcock's films elsewhere (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 15). Such symbolism palpably concerns more than either just 'Eros' or 'Fate' alone. Also, notice that as soon as the credits end, they're followed by a title-card: 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' That passage, from Mark 8:36, as quoted in Hall Caine's novel,[16] asks us to consider what it is that **drives** the story's characters, including the girl Kate (Anny Ondra) with whom both Pete and Phil fall in love ....

The second of the details I mentioned introduces the sequence of the fishing fleet returning to port. It could come straight from a documentary. On a ship's sail in the foreground can be seen the triskele (three-legged) emblem of the Isle of Man. Such a detail matches the London Coat-of-Arms that, postcard-fashion, overlies a corner of the aerial view of the Thames that opens **Frenzy**.

But equally, Hitchcock uses such a detail in both films to launch a major irony. In **Frenzy**, the Coat-of-Arms accompanies an 'official', tourist's-eye view of London, which the film immediately subverts. Likewise, in **The Manxman**, it isn't long before we learn that not everything on the Isle of Man is as 'innocent' as it had first seemed. Professor Maurice Yacowar ('Hitchcock's British Films', 1977) says Hitchcock uses the triskele to represent the perennial nature of the film's 'triangle' story, where Pete is 'body', Phil 'mind', and Kate 'soul'.[17] I'll suggest a slightly different reading, but without denying at all Hitchcock's fundamental intention to be comprehensive ...

A certain kind of melodrama

Now, some more background. Essentially, **The Manxman** ends on Kate's line, 'We too have suffered', much as Hitchcock's first film, **The Pleasure Garden** (1925), ends soon after someone says, 'We've both suffered ...'. So I take it that these two films support Schopenhauer's view that suffering is the inevitable outcome of striving, of Will.[18] Further, I take suffering to be a key theme of most of the other,

rather old-fashioned, melodramas that Hitchcock filmed during his career: e.g. **Downhill**, **Easy Virtue**, **The Paradine Case**, **Under Capricorn**, **I Confess**, **Marnie**.[19] And again, the element of suffering in all of these films is only made more piquant by being combined with a constraint on one or several of the main characters to be silent. It hardly matters that the reasons for such silence differ from film to film. In **Easy Virtue** (1927), when the heroine marries for a second time, she brings with her a background clouded by scandal, of which she has been a (supposedly) innocent victim. Nonetheless, it's this background of which she can't speak that soon proves to be her - and her new marriage's - undoing.

Well, Peter Brooks has noted both melodrama's characteristic desire to 'say all' and its trope of 'muteness' in which 'Virtue, expulsed, eclipsed, apparently fallen, cannot effectively articulate the cause of the right'.[20] That's essentially what I'm talking about here. To illustrate, let's first take 'Enoch Arden'. Enoch, a fisherman, marries a local girl, Annie, but poverty forces him to go abroad for a time as a merchantman. (In **The Manxman**, Pete doesn't actually get to marry Kate before he, too, has to sail off in quest of his fortune.) Soon Annie falls in love with Philip, Enoch's friend who had been his rival for Annie's hand. When news comes that Enoch is dead, Annie and Philip marry. But Enoch has survived. Years later, he returns without anyone recognising him. When he sees the happiness of Annie and Philip and their children, **he resolves to say nothing**. He takes a job as a cooper and carpenter in the port, and lives by his faith. Only on his deathbed does he confide his secret to Miriam, the local innkeeper, who conveys a last blessing to Annie and Philip.

The Manxman has a somewhat different second half to the above, but is otherwise the same story. Pete returns in time to marry Kate, without knowing that she's carrying Phil's child. So the constraint to be silent is shifted to Kate and Phil. That helps to create a more dramatic situation than Tennyson's, which in turn leads to the film's courtroom climax and its aftermath.

Actually, both Tennyson's poem and Hall Caine's novel were immensely popular, and both were filmed more than once. D.W. Griffith made two versions of 'Enoch Arden', in 1910 and 1911 respectively. The first silent version of 'The Manxman' was directed in 1916 by George Loane Tucker. There's another slant to all of this. Apart from outright film versions of the poem (itself similar to one called 'Outward Bound' written in 1858 by Adelaide Proctor, whose work was admired by Dickens),[21] there have been innumerable filmed **variants** of the story. Many of these were transposed to wartime. One I watched recently on TV was Irving Pichel's **Tomorrow is Forever** (1945). Leslie Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' lists a select dozen or so others.

The main point here concerns the nature of (one kind of) melodrama. In it, as I've said, suffering and 'muteness' overlap. Even when some characters seem to attain happiness, this entails the likely **un**happiness of others - which may remind us of Schopenhauer's distinction between flawed 'temporal justice' and an ideal 'eternal justice'. (See my readings of **The Paradine Case** and **Vertigo** in 'MacGuffin' 12.) By no means are such melodramas confined to the 'Enoch Arden' story. Though I've not been able to track down the 1902 play on which Hitchcock based **I Confess**, 'Nos Deux Consciences', by 'Paul Anthelme' (nom-de-plume of Paul Bourde), what's unmistakable is how its plot comes from the same fin-de-siècle era in which Hall Caine wrote his greatest successes. One of those, a novel called 'The Christian' (1905), tells of the love of the worldly Manxwoman Glory Quale for a young clergyman, John Storm, who renounces their love when he takes his vows. Note the resemblance to **I Confess** and, in broad terms, to Robert Hichens's oft-filmed novel, 'The Garden of Allah' (1904), which is a romance set in North Africa about a wealthy English spinster and a man who has fled the religious life ... Hichens of course was the author of 'The Paradine Case' (1933), eventually filmed by Hitchcock. I'm simply suggesting that all of these works may have in common both the theme of suffering and a distinction between what is worldly and what is finally ineffable. So that when a constraint to muteness operates in several of them, it tends to posit its own 'ultimate' consolation - as in the lines I quoted earlier from Tennyson ('That, which being everywhere ...').

Now, as time went on, it's fairly obvious that the authors/auteurs of such works ran the risk of their plots seeming merely corny. In Hitchcock's case, I think he typically solved the problem in two ways. First, as in **The Paradine Case** and **I Confess**, he made the main character flawed or compromised, or otherwise diverted our attention back to the worldly arena. Besides, that worldly arena is where the most elaborate drama is played out. In **The Paradine Case**, not only is Keane (Gregory Peck) appointed to defend the coldly fascinating Mrs Paradine (Alida Valli) against a charge of murder, at London's famous Old Bailey, but then he - who's supposedly happily married - falls deeply in love with his client. No

doubt that's what Hitchcock would call 'a hefty plot'.[22] Second, he often brought to his subject-matter an incisiveness which transformed it from a mere (moral or spiritual) tract into something that could intimate the working of the noumenal (other-worldly) **beneath** the phenomenal (worldly). As the French authors Boileau and Narcejac so brilliantly foresaw, he would end up making **Vertigo** (1958).[23]

It will be helpful to consider a few more melodramas where the trope of muteness is particularly emphasised. Alexandre Bisson's 'Madame X' (1909) is a true warhorse of the stage, not to mention the play's many successful film-versions.[24] It tells of a society woman who, the victim of a scandal, must leave her family and live incognito, becoming ever more lonely and degraded. But her troubles don't end there. One day she finds herself being blackmailed by a rogue who knows of her past. Goaded by him, she kills him. Then comes the time-hallowed courtroom climax. What's memorable about that is how the accused woman is defended by a rising young barrister who, ignorant of the fact, is her son! Of course, **she can't reveal her true identity to him**. When the trial exonerates her, she promptly dies in the young man's arms.

It's not a greatly edifying story, you probably think, yet once again it was a crowd-pleaser. Here I'll note that the courtroom climax of these several melodramas corresponds to another of the stock situations and/or tropes listed by Peter Brooks: namely, the tribunal scene.[25] I take that category to include equivalent scenes set in a church or a theatre. (**I Confess** has all three!) Well, another work that dates from about the turn of the century is a novel by Maxwell Gray, aptly titled 'The Silence of Dean Maitland'. A stage adaptation of it proved popular in Australia, and later inspired two film versions (1914, 1934). The story concerns a clergyman's feeling of guilt that he'd once allowed his best friend to take the blame for a crime he himself had committed. Finally, when the friend is released from prison twenty years later, a broken man, he comes one day to Dean Maitland's very church. The contrite dean is so moved that he confesses his guilt to the congregation, then falls dead. At least two of the story's motifs - the suffering in unspoken guilt, and the betrayal (by one party) of a friendship or other close tie - recur in Hitchcock's work: e.g. in **Downhill**, **The Manxman**, **Under Capricorn**, **I Confess**.

In turn, I'm reminded of the plot of Maurice Elvey's **In a Monastery Garden** (1931), starring such Hitchcockian actors as John Stuart, Alan Napier and Frank Pettingell. It's a film I've not actually seen but greatly want to, for reasons I'll give below. Here's its plot.[26] Michael and Paul Perrier are two English brothers who, on a visit to Italy, both fall in love with the same girl, Nina. The problem is that she's engaged to a worthless count. Then, after the count is murdered, Michael is arrested and imprisoned. This gives Paul an opportunity to woo Nina, impressing her with musical compositions he has stolen from Michael but now passes off as his own. These compositions acquire a reputation as works of genius. As a result, not only does Paul get Nina for himself but he also gains great fame. Meanwhile, Michael has been exonerated of the murder. From prison he goes to a monastery. Years later, when Paul and Nina visit him there, and Paul confesses his deceit, Michael is content that things stay the way they are. **He'll keep silent.**

One more stock ingredient of melodrama listed by Peter Brooks is the 'enclosed garden'.[27] He adds that melodrama's 'space of claustration' may include monasteries and convents. Clearly there's an overlap with what I've called in previous 'MacGuffins' (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 12) the iconography of the Lost Paradise. That iconography typically employs images of either an enclosed garden or a variant of it, such as an island or a snowfield or even a desert. Both Hitchcock's **The Pleasure Garden** and Robert Hichens's desert-set 'The Garden of Allah' are Lost Paradise works. So too, as we'll see, is **The Manxman**, with its island setting ...

But there's another Hitchcock-related matter that helps explain why I'd like to see **In a Monastery Garden**. The 'Variety' review of the film refers to 'its haunting melodies', and I take these to be the ones I heard as a child on an old 78 rpm record that belonged to my father. They were haunting indeed. The record's title-melody was hugely popular in its day, not least with Hitchcock.[28] Accordingly, I often speculate how far the mission scenes in **Vertigo** may be indebted to Maurice Elvey's 1931 film and its music.[29]

'No blame'

To return to **The Manxman**, then, it's curious to note that Hitchcock in later years felt no special fondness for it, indeed telling Truffaut that 'it was a very banal picture' which simply respected the novel's reputation and its tradition. True, there's not much healthy levity in it![30] Perhaps that's

why Hitchcock gave himself no credit for knowing and understanding the melodramatic tradition in the first place, nor for the fine job he and his collaborators did just adapting Hall Caine's book. Eliot Stannard's screenplay was a model of compression, yet it still worked in its own right. For example, the resulting film is full of meaningful business, as well as scene after scene written with feeling. For my part, I admire the picture deeply.

After Pete steps ashore in the opening scene, a couple of proleptic moments follow. (That isn't to say that a 'documentary' element is abandoned.) In the first such moment, a grinning Pete grasps the outstretched hand of Phil, who's wearing a suit. A title notes that the two friends 'met as boys and grew up as brothers'. Phil laughingly wipes any 'fishiness' back onto Pete's sweater ...

Next, another title: 'Still the staunchest friends, they fought side by side for the cause of the lowly fisherfolk.' Phil has drawn up a petition on the fishermen's behalf to the island's Governor. Steam trawlers (presumably British) have been encroaching into local waters. No doubt that's the perennial way of the world and its Will. But in view of how Phil will soon 'poach' Kate from Pete, we should note the irony of the verb 'fought' in that title. As the fishermen head for a meeting in the local pub, called the 'Manx Fairy', a long-shot shows two boys trading blows outside. In ensuing close-shots of the pub's precinct, the boys are still fighting. More than just local colour, that piece of business implies how there are fights **and** fights. And some fights may be, or become, less 'innocent' than others ...

Inside the pub, which is run by old Caesar Cregeen (Randle Ayrton), the local colour continues. Despite his name, the ear-ringed Caesar actually looks more Romany than Roman.[31] What's definite is that he's the film's presiding patriarch. He's the father of Kate, who works at the pub's bar and for whom we immediately see both Pete and Phil show a keen regard. Caesar is ambitious for Kate, and so will discourage the penniless Pete's attentions to her while welcoming Phil's. But first the story focuses on the signing of the petition. Among the signatories gathered at the bar is an old, white-bearded fellow who may remind you of his approximate counterparts in Ealing comedies like **The Titfield Thunderbolt** (1952). Those are also films that feature local colour, and pit old ways against new.

On the other hand, Hitchcock's films typically seek to be comprehensive in a way that the Ealing films don't. Thus the 'Lost Paradise' theme in **The Manxman** is knowingly introduced. Kate, Pete and Phil had grown up close friends in what had indeed been a garden. We glimpse that garden in the scene of Kate and Phil's first tryst (during Pete's absence abroad) in a locale which the novel calls Sulby Glen.[32] Cameraman Jack Cox photographs the leafy scene in radiant sunlight. You may think of **The Trouble With Harry** (1956), probably the closest Hitchcock came to making a 'Paradise Regained' film. (Yet that's also the film of his most like an Ealing comedy.)[33] Also, here anticipating a couple of scenes in **I Confess**, the film implies that there's something fantastical about the setting. Kate, in a little girl's dress, waves disingenuously to the approaching Phil. Soon they'll become, as the novel puts it, 'like other children of the garden of Eden, driven out and stripped naked'.[34]

Soon, too, that turn of events will give piquancy to the recurring shot of a lighthouse, the film's most emblematic image apart from the credits-shot of breaking waves - to which it obviously relates. After the fishermen have gone home from the Manx Fairy, the film cuts to a close-up of the lighthouse tower with its beam sweeping the harbour. As the novel never mentions a lighthouse, we can deduce that Hitchcock had his own good reasons for showing it. Most immediately, the shot announces the coming of night: next we see Pete and Phil still lingering at the Manx Fairy's bar, while in the adjoining parlour, behind a latticed window, Caesar, Kate and 'Grannie' sit around. Kate is helping her father count the day's takings. The realism of these details is heightened by more fine cinematography and careful attention to lighting.

But further, the lighthouse-shot has its symbolic and dramatic functions. It will recur at various turning-points in the story, the first of which is about to happen. One of the shot's functions is to enjoin the characters to take care. Equally, as calamities sometimes arise whatever safeguards are taken, that too is implied. The lighthouse beam, compared with the surrounding night, is so puny! Nearly thirty years after this film, Hitchcock made his **most** documentary-like movie, **The Wrong Man** (1957). It begins by establishing 'Manny' Balestrero's snug, routine-based existence amidst the whir and bustle of New York City. The constant roar of trains, both underground and on railway overpasses, is stressed. Hence, in the scene where Manny comes home one night and, in the silent house, we hear the bedside clock give a mere tinkle, it's easy to sense a calamity coming ...

Perhaps the first time we feel the approach of calamity in **The Manxman** is when Pete, in the Manx Fairy that night, can't face having to ask the formidable Caesar for Kate's hand; so he prevails on his lawyer friend, Phil, to 'plead' for him. What Pete doesn't see is that Phil fancies Kate as much as he does. Phil complies with his buddy's request, but Caesar wrathfully orders Pete out anyway. Then Pete has another idea. As the lighthouse beam again sweeps past, he tells Phil that he'll go abroad and make his fortune, provided Kate will agree to wait for him. Impetuously, he heads for Kate's lighted first-floor window and throws up pebbles to attract her attention. When Kate answers the summons (then modestly retreats back inside for a moment to fetch a shawl), Pete climbs on Phil's shoulders the better to talk to her. Thus Phil is able to overhear everything that is said - **yet himself stays silent** even when Kate, after hesitating, tells Pete that she'll do as he asks. All this time, the lighthouse beam keeps sweeping by. It even seems to be moving faster now. That may **not** be plausible, exactly, yet the achieved effect is perfectly right, matching our quickened feelings.

What do these scenes tell us? Let's start by noticing that the various characters all **suffer** from ambitiousness. In other words, their situation matches the unhappy human condition so often described in Schopenhauer (not to mention Buddhist teaching). Caesar is a former miller who, after marrying 'Grannie', acquired the Manx Fairy from her side of the family. Now he wants Kate, too, to rise in the world: clearly he'd like Phil to be her husband. But Pete, the honest fisherman, though **he**'s rebuked by Caesar for being poor (no thanks to those British trawlers) suddenly finds that he has his own ambition, involving going abroad and making his fortune. And Kate, who seems to fancy Phil at least as much as Pete - surely another sign of ambitiousness - commits herself to the latter, then instantly has second thoughts **about which she keeps silent**. As for Phil, we'll soon learn that he's driven to seek high office by an ambitious aunt and by memories of his father's fate. (Thomas Christian's career had been blighted after he'd 'married beneath him'.)

Further, there's an implication that whereas Phil's unworldly father had married for love, Caesar's marriage was prompted by more venal motives. Certainly 'Grannie', Caesar's wife, hardly epitomises conjugal joy. She's a frail-looking creature whose nickname seems revealing. Yet you can't say that 'true love' would have forestalled the calamity now fast approaching. After all, it's clear that Pete loves Kate - there's 'no-one else' - yet it's also clear that such love can be blind to adult realities.

Again, the film doesn't hide the fact that its characters are flawed. An instance of this is its emphasis on Pete's inability to ask Caesar directly for Kate's hand. By the same token, it allows the characters their reasons. A subjective close-up of Caesar glowering at Pete/us would surely quail the stoutest of hearts. So, if I may quote the 'I Ching' (the ancient Chinese book of wisdom), there can be 'no blame'.[35] Even Caesar's ambitiousness for the lovely Kate is laudable, considered in his own worldly terms.

Such superior melodrama as I take this to be hardly deserves Hitchcock's tag, 'banal'. Alongside Yacowar's body-mind-soul conception of the film, I'd put the passage from Erich Fromm's 'The Art of Loving' that I've quoted at the head of this article. Fromm uses the parable of the three men asked to describe an elephant in the dark to illustrate his concept of paradoxical, non-Aristotelian logic.[36] He then links use of the implied 'holistic' thought to 'the **tolerance** which we find in Indian and Chinese religious development'.[37] In sum, I think that **good** melodrama, the kind towards which Hitchcock's desire to make comprehensive statements so often led him,[38] here receives an early try-out in his work.

Entrapment

When Philip Kemp says that Hitchcock 'had scant interest in documentary', I assume he means that Hitchcock wasn't interested in using detail in his films just for its own sake. Which is quite true. Everything had to serve some intended effect. Subjectivity rather than objectivity is what these films are about. As I say, they're documentaries about the audience. Hitchcock's approach is exactly in keeping with Kant and Schopenhauer's understanding that we're all bound in subjectivity anyway. And one of the truly satisfying things about Hitchcock's movies is that they never strive for false objectivity, or to impart phoney sentiment, or to deliver abstract messages. Their comprehensiveness is deeply instinctive, based on something fundamental.[39] What these films do deliver is an audience-centred **experience** which Hitchcock himself compared to a roller-coaster ride. In turn, I would liken that to Schopenhauer's notion of the Will which, he said, we **experience** within our individual bodies though it's really everywhere and in everything.[40]

Let's now consider the moment in **The Manxman** that tells us that Pete, contrary to reports, is alive, that he has indeed made his fortune, and that he's about to return home. It's all conveyed with a shot or two of him grinning at the camera, plus an insert of the note he has written to Phil. The wide-shot of Pete includes - this shown through a latticed window behind him - a file of native workers bearing brimming (coffee?) baskets on their shoulders. No doubt that shot constitutes an image of colonial capitalism at its most exploitative. But notice further that these several shots are doubly subjective. First, Pete's grin and his stance - his back to the natives - tells us of his success and, simultaneously, of how naïve or questionable it may be. Second, his grin represents an attitude of the **filmmakers**, in as much as they've here played a trick on us: the note Pete writes to Phil begins, 'They said I had been killed but I wasn't ...', and his grin **direct to the camera** signals that the joke is indeed on us.

Nor is that all that these shots do. The wide-view showing the native workers is clearly more succinct for Hitchcock's purpose than separate documentary footage would have been. Still, the shot isn't **anti**-documentary. More importantly, because part of the shot is framed by that lattice window (an echo of the film frame), its content acquires **extra** meaning, a more 'holistic' meaning. Shots through latticed windows recur throughout the film. Rather than just anticipating 'the interest in voyeurism in [Hitchcock's] later work' (as Geoff Andrew, another British 'empiricist' critic, says),[41] the shots seem to me to emphasise the specific themes I've mentioned: the fragmentation of the whole picture by individual viewpoints (cf the parable of the elephant in the dark) and the suffering-in-silence motif. For a start, those native workers in some far-flung corner of Africa are themselves a part of the overall picture, albeit a largely forgotten part.

Earlier, the scene in which Phil approached Caesar on Pete's behalf had also featured a lattice window. Pete, forced to look on at what was happening behind it, had felt momentarily excluded from control of his own future.[42] Later, we'll watch Kate, trapped into marrying Pete, peering out forlornly through the lattice window of their cottage. She's like a bird trapped in a cage.[43] Altogether, the film is reminding us that few of us control our own lives. A correlative of this is its emphasis on fate. An early sequence is especially crucial here. After talking with his aunt, Phil resolves to break off his growing intimacy with Kate (Pete is still away). He sets out, full of resolve, for the Manx Fairy. Arriving, he encounters a hubbub. A telegram has just come saying that Pete is dead. Caesar looks disconcerted, even guilty, at the news; but when Phil comes upon Kate, in a dramatic cut to close-up, her first words to him are, 'Phil, we're free!' In fact, of course, **Phil** is now trapped - in spite of his resolve.

Still more ironically, Kate herself isn't free, nor was she ever. Not even before 'the wider world' entered the picture, as it did at least as early - or late - as the advent of those British trawlers. There was always Will and its dictates. Hitchcock films the build-up to this scene in a manner identical to that he uses in **I Confess** where Father Logan (Montgomery Clift) comes on Ruth Grandfort (Anne Baxter) in a street humming with the news that the blackmailer Vilette has been murdered. Ruth, who's as single-minded as Kate, breathes the same words, 'We're free!' Whatever exactly she means - she's a married woman - it's certain that both her and Logan's main troubles are only just beginning. You think too of the adulterous Nicole Devereaux's smug words to Jacques Granville in **Topaz** (1969), as she kisses him, 'I'm a free woman!' In all of these cases, what seems clear is that Hitchcock's 'pessimistic' intent is to show how freedom, in or out of morality, just doesn't exist.

A couple of 'pedestrian' sequences that aren't

I shan't dwell on the two scenes set in Caesar's mill. Their symbolism is straightforward, including the moment Yacowar notes when Kate beckons Phil towards her and he hesitates, aware of what may follow.[44] A dangerous-looking coil of rope lies on the floor in front of him, and you think of some later Hitchcock heroes' reluctance to face marriage (cf in particular the dream-symbolism of **Spellbound**, discussed in 'MacGuffin' 15). Also, the wedding-breakfast scene in **The Manxman** makes for an interesting comparison with the one in Chabrol's **Le Boucher** (1969), about which Robin Wood notes that Chabrol was 'very concerned to capture, not just the appearance, but the spirit of village life'.[45] I don't think Hitchcock's scene is disgraced by the comparison.

Two remarkable sequences that I **would** like to dwell on have much in common. Both contain their share of 'documentary' detail yet are decidedly more than that. In the first, Kate sets out for an assignation with Phil. She's excited, and the sequence begins intimately by showing her readying herself before a small mirror in her bedroom. Then she starts down the narrow stairs above the Manx Fairy's bar, through

which she must pass. Nonchalantly, she strolls past its few daytime patrons and lets herself into the street. Outside, the picturesque fishing town is going about its business, and she begins to hurry. Soon she's climbing the grassy cliff above the town, where gulls wheel overhead. Next, a long-shot in silhouette shows her crossing a dip between two hills; a small bank of cloud seems to bid fair weather. Then in a succession of seven shots, she sees Phil waiting for her in a cove on the beach, he sees her and waves, and she descends the cliff and runs to him: all seven shots are framed by rock formations of the cliff. Though the sand in the cove is waterlogged and strewn with pools, she retains her momentum until she's in Phil's arms. What's ironic is that those rocks may remind us of the credits-sequence and the jagged rock there; and they definitely present a near-total contrast to the idyllic Sulby Glen scene ...

In its way, this wordless sequence is as eloquent as Marion Crane's headlong flight towards the Bates Motel in **Psycho**, or the wordless sequence in **Vertigo** in which 'Scottie' trails Madeleine across town to his own front door - which is a shameless, sexy red (in a film whose predominant colour is green). In each case, a 'hopeful' trajectory presages calamity. Underlying that trajectory is an impulsive, self-centred urge, though being a 'natural' one it's hardly very reprehensible. I'd add that precisely in that ambiguity is much that is poignant about Hitchcock's filmmaking.[46]

A second **Manxman** sequence also shows a character traversing a part of the island. It's the sequence where Pete heads home on foot after a day's work, and it represents an early example of Hitchcockian suspense. At home, Kate, now married to Pete, has summoned Phil to the cottage for a clandestine meeting, and has just told him that she's carrying his child. In a panic, the pair debate whether to tell Pete 'everything'. Kate thinks they must, but Phil is against it ('No - not now! Think of the shame.') At this point, the film cuts to Pete coming along the shore, where he waves to a man seated on a boat. Behind them, the sky is clear. Back home, Kate and Phil are arguing. Next, Pete is shown passing a row of cottages and greeting an old lady seated in the doorway of one of them. The sky is still cloudless, and the picturesque view has a timeless quality. The film cuts back to the cottage where the same argument as before is repeated. Now Pete arrives outside, and peers in a window. From his point of view, we can see the back of a man, i.e. Phil, who is standing very close to Kate and might even be kissing her. Pete noticeably hurries to the cottage doorway, but as soon as he recognises Phil his anxious face unclouds, and he greets his buddy with outstretched hand. (That gesture provides an ironic echo of their handclasp in the opening sequence). Then he kisses Kate and again shakes Phil's hand.

In 'Lost Paradise' terms, what this sequence does is show Pete still living in a **fool**'s paradise. The sequence prepares us for what comes next: when Kate tells Pete that she's pregnant, he instantly assumes that he's the father - no thought that the father might be his trusted buddy. So all that picturesqueness I mentioned, that quasi-documentary detail, has its point. Further, I'm reminded of the way Pete in the novel unwittingly characterises himself as almost a **holy** fool - see the passage from the novel quoted at the head of this article - which in turn reminds me again of something Erich Fromm said. Commenting on the **tolerance**, mentioned earlier, found in Indian and Chinese religious development, he wrote: 'If the right thought is not the ultimate truth, and not [of itself] the way to salvation, there is no reason to fight others, whose thinking has arrived at different formulations.'[47] That's surely true, and before the film is over Pete must learn that, though he's been wronged, his own 'innocence' isn't absolute or the whole story. I'll come to the courtroom showdown in a moment.[48]

And another, both rich and strange

Kate's suicide attempt, after she has told Pete that the recently-born baby isn't his (but not who the real father is), makes for one more fine sequence that starts out with a character walking. But now Kate no longer hurries. It's night again, and again the lighthouse beam sweeps the harbour-side. Kate moves almost trance-like through the town's narrow streets, beautifully photographed in pools of light and darkness. I suspect that these few shots were inspired by a passage in the novel describing a journey made by Pete to the town of Douglas (capital of the Isle of Man) in search of Kate, who has disappeared:

> Pete rambled through the narrow thoroughfares ... until he came to the sea front. It was now full tide of busy night ... every open window had its dark heads with the light behind ...[49]

Equally, you may feel an anticipation of some sequences in **I Confess**, including the one in which Father Logan wanders the streets of Quebec City, uncertain whether to give himself up to the police who suspect him of Vilette's murder.

Kate comes finally to the harbour-side, where boats are moored in a darkness broken only fitfully by the lighthouse beam sweeping past. At the sea wall she stops and slowly tilts her head upwards to inspect a ship's mast. There can be no mistaking: the moment exactly anticipates the one in **Vertigo** just before Madeleine runs up the bell-tower to her apparent death. Next, a startling close-up shows us Kate's composed, beautiful face, her blonds hair caught by the light, and some strands billowing to one side: you think of a religious painting by Botticelli - or of Marion Crane's transfigured, upturned face, surmounted by a halo-like shower-nozzle, moments before she dies in **Psycho**.

Yet strangely there's another famous Renaissance painting that the scene as a whole reminds me of. The association is a subjective one, and I'm mentioning it mainly to show how, when we stop some films at key points, we really do find incredible richness. The painting is Giorgione's 'Tempesta' (1504), the one with the mysterious broken column, a turbulent stream, and a flash of lightning. On the left, a man, whose breeches bulge impressively in front (!), stands holding a staff and watching a half-naked woman across the way, where she's suckling a baby. According to Sir Kenneth Clark, nobody has ever known what the painting represents![50] Well, I guess that lets me venture my own interpretation: namely, that the man has suddenly understood the omnipresence of Will, whose chief agent is sexuality, and how he and the woman (whose child is surely his) form a small part of its perennial process. The broken column on a pedestal - it looks to me more like **two** broken columns - is the symbol of that process and the couple's part in it. Likewise, a town in the background, with its towers and domes, represents the world's stage on which the man and the woman together play a brief role.

You may see why I think of the harbour-side scene in **The Manxman**, in which Kate attempts suicide after Pete has refused to give up the baby. She has just felt herself **estranged**, morally and actually, from the world (here represented by the town of Peel behind her), and so prepares to quit it for good. The turbulent black water at the bottom of the frame, occasionally lit up by the lighthouse beam - which, unlike Giorgione's flash of lightning, grants no sudden epiphany (at least to Kate) - stands for death. But it also stands for the larger process, i.e. Will. (Cf the waves behind the credits.) From a shot of the swirling water after Kate has plunged into it, the film lap-dissolves to an ink well, into which Phil, newly-appointed Deemster, dips his pen ...

Actually, Hitchcock was probably inspired to treat the moment this way by having read a passage early in Hall Caine's novel. Visiting the countryside with Phil one day, Kate becomes entranced by what she calls '[t]he fairy's dubb', i.e. 'a little round pool, **black as ink**, lying quiet and apparently motionless under a noisy place where ... the stream ran into the dark' (my emphasis).[51] The novel makes frequent reference to matters of superstition and the supernatural (something which the film in turn picks up on: e.g. when it shows **an upturned horseshoe** under Kate's window at the **Manx Fairy**). On this occasion, Kate kneels on the edge of the pool and ruffles its surface with a willow branch, while she recites an incantation:

> Willow bough, willow bough, which of the four,
> Sink, circle, or swim, or come floating ashore?
> Which is the fortune you keep for my life,
> Old maid or young mistress or widow or wife?

Obviously, that verse may in turn have inspired Hitchcock's symbolic use of the lighthouse, as in the scene I've just mentioned in parenthesis where Pete begs Kate to wait for him, and the beam lights up the horseshoe on the wall. Perhaps, too, it was even the inspiration for some Hitchcock scenes to come, such as Doris Day's 'Que Sera Sera' song in the 1956 **The Man Who Knew Too Much** ...[52]

The courtroom

If what Philip Kemp calls 'the floppier, more disorderly emotions' seldom figure in Hitchcock's work, I suspect that's because, sadly, they're just offshoots of more basic drives: for instance, Schopenhauer thought of happiness as just suspended willing. In other words, in concerning themselves with 'the total picture', both Hitchcock and Schopenhauer saw that what figure **most** prominently in it are things like suffering and selfishness and blindness - though as **The Birds** emphasises, the consolation of human warmth is also vital. Further, let's not forget Hitchcock's 'saving grace' of humour. Probably humour is not the main strength of either your average documentary nor of the films made by Hitchcock's imitators, yet it was always a major feature of his own work. It was essentially a humour of character and situation, and thus another factor helping to keep his audience at film-centre. Take the scene in **The Manxman** where

Pete waits anxiously to learn whether, as he thinks, he has become a father. He's playing draughts with Phil and not noticing what moves he should make. Then, hearing screams from upstairs, he abandons the game and collapses on his knees into a chair. To this point, the scene is fairly routine, though we may note, firstly, that already it's typical of Hitchcock that he doesn't spare reminding us of a character's suffering (here, primarily Kate's), and, secondly, that Pete is played by actor Carl Brisson who in Hitchcock's previous picture, **The Ring**, had played a tough professional boxer! (And Pete himself is a seasoned fisherman!) Also, there's the irony that throughout the scene **Phil** can only watch and **suffer in silence.** To cap off that irony, Hitchcock introduces the doctor. As he comes down the stairs, we see that he looks like Donald Crisp from some nice Hollywood family picture! Then, on entering the room, he first takes Phil to be the father ...

But now I come to the film's courtroom climax, full of what I want to call incipient homely detail. Homely detail had been a feature of the scenes set in Pete and Kate's cottage, where it was detectable in everything from the cheery furnishings and settings to Pete's bare-chested arrival at the breakfast table. (Not only had Carl Brisson played a boxer in **The Ring** but clearly he was something of a hunk - no doubt the inspiration for this particular episode.) By contrast, the courtroom sequence begins on a formal note, with the business of a serious-looking Phil dipping his pen in the ink well and writing in the Deemster's large book. Further, the various occupants of the courtroom - barristers, attendants, members of the public - are all very properly dressed for a day in court. Yet most of them, the regulars, already seem **at home** here as they wait for proceedings to begin. When a cowled woman, like a penitent, is brought before the Deemster, charged with attempted suicide, you can sense a measure of 'familial' pity extended to her by those present. Sunlight streams through a window, and in long-shot the courtroom resembles the interior of a church. But a (Manx?) coat-of-arms is prominently emblazoned high up on one wall ...

The woman is Kate. Shocked, but recovering himself quickly, Deemster Christian is about to speak, but Kate puts a finger to her lips. At this point, Pete bursts in, followed by Caesar and 'Grannie'. So now the scene contains a mix of genuinely familial and more formal ingredients: in effect, ones of an actual family and the wider community, respectively. The film will soon show that there's an inevitable disjunction between the two, and that if it's futile to try to keep some matters in the family, so to speak, it may be equally futile to expect perfect justice or magnanimity of society. Not surprisingly, Pete doesn't straight away grasp such distinctions. He's uncertain about how to address his old friend, the Deemster, and when he starts to speak on Kate's behalf, in one breath he says: 'I'll take her back, sir. Please let her go, Philip.' What he doesn't yet know is that he's addressing the very person perhaps most responsible for what's happened.

Then, when the Deemster rules that Kate should indeed return to her husband - but she refuses - an impasse occurs. It's broken by Caesar, whose name once again may remind us of his worldliness. Unlike Professor Yacowar, though, I don't regard Caesar as a mere hypocrite (because of the store he sets on money, for example).[53] **Caesar, too, sees part of the truth.** For some time, he has begun to realise what has happened between his daughter and Phil. Now he speaks out. Pointing accusingly at Phil, he announces: 'There before you is [Kate's] betrayer, the Deemster himself.' Turning to Pete, he asks: 'Can't you see, Pete - can't you see?'

Phil makes up his mind at last. He tells the court, who have come along expecting only to admire this man who has succeeded so soon to a position **that runs in his family**, that Caesar speaks truly. He adds: 'I am not fit to sit in judgment on my fellows, I who have sinned against God and man.' Here the film's symbolic setting again asserts itself. In effect, and as so often in the past, the Family of Man has proved flawed, a vain ideal.

During the scene, Kate has been attended by a kindly-looking social worker - another example of what I mean by incipient homely detail.[54] Now the ambience changes, as Pete finally comprehends. At first, he stands thunderstruck beside one of the courtroom's pillars. (The symbolism here seems to relate to his excessive trust in his own and the world's righteousness: cf the passage from the novel I've already mentioned in which he says, 'I have no will but Thine ...'.) Then, for the first time in the film, he momentarily shows anger, and grabs at Phil. But Kate intervenes. She speaks the film's last line: 'Pete, we too have suffered.'

Knowing too little

There's a coda. Returning one last time to the cottage, Kate and Phil take leave of Pete before

departing with their baby. Through the latticed panes of the window, hostile neighbours - mostly women - look on. They don't understand ... In their incomprehension of the whole picture, they're like everyone else in the film. In a way, they also anticipate certain characters in later Hitchcock movies: e.g. such characters as Emma Newton (Patricia Collinge) as we see her near the end of **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) - where she actually murmurs, 'I just don't understand it' - and Manny Balestrero at the end of **The Wrong Man** (see my article, "The Man Who Knew Too Little", in 'MacGuffin' 6). Moreover, by photographing them like this, through the lattice window, the film effectively makes these lookers-on surrogates for us, the audience, who are watching them looking on ... And the Pirandellian point?[55] Simply, I think, that if we try to deny that we're part of 'the total picture' we only make ourselves more, rather than less, complicit in the world's suffering, whose ultimate cause is Will itself. As I said in 'MacGuffin' 17, the typical Hitchcock ending tells us, 'Now, after all you've seen here, it's back to you'. **The Manxman** provides an early instance of what I mean.

A line of women jeers at Kate and Phil as they leave. The next shot is of the cottage, in long-shot now, under a gloomy sky. The women are gone, and in their place is a flock of geese. Inevitably, you think of Fritz Lang's **Fury** (1936) with its inter-cutting of gossipy women and cackling hens. Above all, though, the shot is a reminder of how life is a vale of darkness and tears.

Cut to the herring fleet back at sea. Pete is at the prow of his boat, staring vacantly. This ending is scarcely more optimistic than the heavily ironic one of 'Enoch Arden':

> So past the strong heroic soul away.
> And when they buried him the little port
> Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

Probably Tennyson's lines prompted Hall Caine to give his novel its Biblical motto, 'What shall it profit a man?' That's also the nominal moral of Hitchcock's film. However, I think the film shows us that matters of soul aren't finally graspable in this world, where mere phenomenal knowledge holds sway. So it's fitting that Hitchcock should turn his film back over to us. He has given us a mirror, his own special kind of 'documentary', and we as individuals must make of it what we can.

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Notes

1. Sir Hall Caine, 'The Manxman: A Novel' (1894), Part VI, iv. By 'the Manx poet' Pete presumably means T(homas) E(dward) Brown (1830-97), born in the Isle of Man, whose collected poems were issued in 1900 and reprinted in 1952.

2. Erich Fromm, 'The Art of Loving' (Unwin paperback edition, 1962), p. 59.

3. Robin Wood, 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989), with a chapter on **Marnie**.

4. Robert E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992). Chapter Four includes a discussion of Wood's reading of **Marnie**.

5. To answer my own question, the correct answer seems to be Jane Ellice Hopkins (1836-1904), though Carlyle's 'Frederick the Great' (Vol. 4) is another candidate!

6. See Hitchcock's interview with Truffaut - though note that I'm simply inferring an implied parallel with Ruttman's famous film.

7. Again, see Truffaut. Another representative cross-section of characters occurs in **Lifeboat** (1944). By the way, I'm aware of the charge that neither **Frenzy** nor **Rear Window** (nor **Lifeboat**) is in fact strictly accurate about the locale shown. But I hold the view that Hitchcock **knew** the facts and then simply calculated how far he might bend them for the sake of a greater verisimilitude. In the text, I deal with at least one such instance in **The Manxman**, involving that film's manipulation of its recurring image of a lighthouse.

8. This was in conversation with Leslie Perkoff, in "The censor and Sydney Street", 'World Film News' (London), 2/12, March 1939, pp. 4-5. Quoted in Jane E. Sloan, 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Definitive Filmography' (1995), p. 357 (item 128).

9. Charles L. P. Silet, "Writing for Hitch: An Interview With Evan Hunter", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1995-96 edition, pp. 119-20.

10. Russell Merritt, "Melodrama: Postmortem for a Phantom Genre", in 'Wide Angle' 5/3 (1983), pp. 24-31.

11. Both these quotations will be found on p. 29 of the above. In the present text, I'll make observations on how Hitchcock's **The Manxman** exemplifies such items as I've cited here: e.g. how industries work, and local colour.

12. According to Michael Powell, who was Hitchcock's stills photographer on **The Manxman**, most of the shooting was done at Minehead in Somerset and in North Cornwall. John Russell Taylor says that some scenes were also shot at and around Polperro, on the **South** Cornwall coast. See Michael Powell, 'A Life in Movies' (1986), p. 191, and John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch' (1978), p. 94.

13. For new 'MacGuffin' readers, I'll note that Hitchcock-Schopenhauer parallels provide an ongoing motif in these pages. In broad, Schopenhauer's concept of Will as life-force, as that which drives or binds all worldly phenomena, seems to me something that goes to the heart of Hitchcock's films and gives them their 'vision' (as I call it in the text). Almost incidentally, I think the concept is a truism.

14. According to Theodore Price, in his 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992), p. 270, Quebec City by 1952 was the only place in North America where priests still wore the cassock.

15. This information comes from the Selznick Studio's publicity material for the film. See also my article on **The Paradine Case** in 'MacGuffin' 12.

16. Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's British Films' (1977), p. 287 (note 8), is wrong to say that this Biblical passage doesn't occur in the text of the novel, though it appears on the title page (in some editions). Late in the novel (VI, xiv), Phil muses that 'he had gained all that his little world could give; and what was the worth of it? What was the price he had paid for it?' Here he repeats to himself the passage from St Mark's Gospel.

17. Yacowar, p, 88.

18. That's a basic tent of Schopenhauer's philosophy. His essay, "On the Suffering of the World", is a rare work of literature, not least because it's patently true. I think Schopenhauer, like Hitchcock, was capable of a sane man's Weltschmertz. In 'MacGuffin' 8, I tried to show how a theme of universal suffering is central to Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain** (1966).

19. I think Theodore Price, op. cit., has pointed out the old-fashioned aspect of many of the stories Hitchcock adapted into films. I discussed this matter in my review of Price's book in 'MacGuffin' 12. Several of the stories, including 'The Manxman', are by homosexual authors. Cf note 21 below.

20. Quoted in Leland Poague, "Engendering **Vertigo**", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1994 edition, p. 27.

21. According to an item in 'The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English' (1994), p. 302, 'Enoch Arden' was based on a prose sketch written for Tennyson by his friend, the painter Thomas Woolner. The item adds that a similar theme appears in Elizabeth Gaskell's novel, 'Sylvia's Lovers' (1863), and in the poem by Adelaide Anne Procter I've mentioned in the text. For what it's worth, Tennyson is one more author said to have been homosexual (cf note 19 above). See Martin Greif, 'The Gay Book of Days' (1985), p. 153: and cf p. 86 where there's an amusing entry on Hall Caine.

22. Hitchcock told Donald Spoto that his aim as a director was to 'tell a good story and develop a hefty plot'. See caption under photo on the title-page of Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (Second Edition, 1992).

23. As I've said before (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 11), Boileau and Narcejac's novel, 'D'Entre les Morts' (c.

1955), written with Hitchcock in mind to direct its film version, constitutes one of the most brilliant of all pieces of Hitchcock criticism.

24. 'Madame X' has lately received much attention from scholars. In Christian Viviani's "Who is Without Sin? The Maternal Melodrama in American Film, 1930-39", he qualifies the term 'warhorse' (also used by Halliwell) by saying that it applies just to **Anglo-Saxon** stages: the French theatre, where the play was first performed, has largely ignored it. (Viviani's essay, originally published in 'Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque' 28, July 1979, is reprinted in Christine Gledhill, ed., 'Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film', 1987, pp. 83-99.) The play has had four film versions in English (two silent, two sound), plus at least one television production (1981). Also, its pathos made it appealing to Japanese audiences, and Mizoguchi's film, **Taki no Shiraito/The Water Magician** (1933) closely resembles it. (My thanks to Freda Freiberg for that information.)

25. Quoted in Poague, p. 27.

26. The information here is extracted from the film's review in 'Variety' at the time and a synopsis in Jay R. Nash and Stanley R. Ross (eds), 'The Motion Picture Guide', H-K: 1927-1983 (1986). My thanks to Carol Abbott, Research and Information, Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, for obtaining me the relevant material.

27. Quoted in Poague, p. 27.

28. Such, at least, is my inference from the scornful remark of Bernard Herrmann that Hitchcock, if 'left by himself, ... would play "In a Monastery Garden" behind all his pictures!' Herrmann's remark is quoted in Steven C. Smith, 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann' (1991), p. 32.

29. I'm aware, though, that for **Vertigo** Hitchcock particularly had in mind, firstly, paintings by Vermeer, and, secondly, the stage production he had seen in 1920 of James Barrie's 'Mary Rose', including its score that '"used very effectively a background sound effect ... of eerie music, angels singing and low moaning wind"'. This information comes from **Vertigo** notes, Hitchcock collection, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, cited in Smith, p. 220 and p. 391 (note 4).

30. For that very reason, it's all the more to my point here! Even so, I'll give an instance in the text of Hitchcock's humour as seen in **The Manxman**.

31. In the novel, Caesar is a zealous Methodist, much given to quoting the Bible. Hall Caine allows himself some fun at Caesar's expense when he has someone trick him into buying back his own ailing cow. Whereupon Pete tries to console Caesar by telling him, 'it'll be all set right at the Judgment'. (V, xiii.)

32. This episode is recounted in Caine, II, xxiii.

33. However, Deputy Sheriff Calvin Wiggs's hobby of restoring vintage motor-cars may constitute a nod by Hitchcock to another popular British comedy of the period, Henry Cornelius's Ealing-like **Genevieve** (1953). In any event, by the end of his own film Hitchcock has provided a subtle critique of the wishful Ealing ethos ...

34. Caine, II, v. Cf Tennyson's somewhat ironic description in 'Enoch Arden' of the island where Enoch is shipwrecked as 'this Eden of all plenteousness'.

35. By no means, though, is that injunction in the 'I Ching'/'Book of Changes' as bland as it may sound to Western ears. The text of this truly remarkable work fully recognises as important a right-minded attitude in human affairs ...

36. The parable of the elephant in the dark is widely known. I even saw it casually referred to on the Internet recently! The wide acceptance of it as meaningful seems to me only to confirm its significance.

37. Fromm, p. 59. On p. 55, 'paradoxical' logic is briefly defined as that 'which assumes that A and non-A do not exclude each other as predicates of X'. Fromm then notes its early manifestation in Chinese and Indian thinking and in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

38. Culminating, once again, in **Vertigo**. Cf 'MacGuffin' 17 on that film.

39. I'm even reminded of Nietzsche's distinction, in 'The Birth of Tragedy', between the 'Dionysian' artist attuned to 'the spirit of music' and the mere 'theoretical man', exemplified for Nietzsche by Socrates, with his complacent 'scientific' optimism! Having said that, I may as well cite this passage from the same work: 'The tremendous courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer carried off the most difficult victory: victory over the optimism that lurked within the essence of logic, which in turn forms the basis of our culture.' The passage is on p. 87 of the recent translation of 'The Birth of Tragedy' by Shaun Whiteside (Penguin Books, 1993).

40. This understanding of how the Will is, in a sense, knowable represents Schopenhauer's advancement on Kant who had simply said that the Thing-in-itself (= the Will, in Schopenhauer's view) is unknowable by definition. In 'MacGuffin' 8, I analysed **Torn Curtain** in the light of Schopenhauer's understanding (cf note 18 above).

41. Review by G. Andrew of **The Manxman** in J. Pym (ed.), 'Time Out Film Guide' (1955), p. 454. The same reviewer's entry on **Vertigo** (p. 784) is equally notional: 'Brilliant but despicably cynical view of human obsession and the tendency of those in love to try and manipulate each other.' As I say, such 'received' opinions are at best half-truths. Here, Judy's attempt **not** to manipulate 'Scottie' goes by the board.

42. Cf part of the Harlem hotel sequence in **Topaz** (1969).

43. Cf, for instance, **Marnie**, where Marnie is trapped into marriage with Mark Rutland.

44. Yacowar, p. 93.

45. Robin Wood, 'Claude Chabrol' (1970), p. 132.

46. The aftermath of this episode, in which impending calamity is signalled when the ship bringing Pete home sails into view, has been well-analysed by Charles Barr in 'MacGuffin' 6. Barr's article, "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British Period" ('MacGuffin' 6, pp. 3-6) calls **The Manxman** 'one of the finest of all [Hitchcock's] films'. Cf also a similar moment in 'Enoch Arden'.

47. Fromm, p. 59.

48. At the end of the courtroom scene, Pete shapes to hit Phil. But Kate restrains him with a word. It's the pay-off to the 'fighting' motif introduced early in the film. On 'innocence', which is always relative, I think it's fair to say that Schopenhauer, Hall Caine and Hitchcock all held some notion of 'original sin'. (On Schopenhauer's and Hitchcock's understanding of it, see "San Francisco, Hitchcock, and Me", in 'MacGuffin' 1.)

49. Caine, V, vi.

50. Kenneth Clark, 'Civilisation' (1969), p. 115. Clark, though he notes the considerable range of Giorgione's subjects, ends up describing him as representative 'of the new pessimism - new, because without the comfort of religion - that was to be given final expression by Hamlet' (p. 116).

51. Caine, II, xxiii. This incident forms part of the Sulby Glen episode.

52. You think also of the scene in **Vertigo** where Madeleine/Judy stands on the shore of San Francisco Bay, plucking flowers from a posy and strewing them on the water below, before finally she leaps in herself ...

53. Cf Yacowar, p. 94 and p. 96. I think Yacowar is unjustly hard on Caesar, whom he calls 'the most malicious, craven, unattractive character in the film'.
54. Sloan, p. 74, significantly mistakes the social worker for Mrs Cregeen.

55. As I remarked apropos **Vertigo** in 'MacGuffin' 17, Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), a Schopenhauerian, and one of the great dramatists/writers depicting themes of suffering and appearance-versus-reality, is an advocate of compassion ...

Notes for "Their Way: Hitchcock's 'Spellbound' (1945)" - carried over from 'MacGuffin' 15

73. Brandon in **Rope** and Gavin Elster in **Vertigo** represent, respectively, a would-be, but twisted, Nietzschean 'Superman' and a debased, mercantile Faust. Both pursue their own, perverted notions of **unbridled** power. (Mind you, Hitchcock thought that, ultimately, 'everything's perverted in a different way' - a highly Schopenhauerian idea.) One instructive text with which to study the 'castration' theme in Hitchcock's films is Yukio Mishima's 'The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea' (1966). Its young, self-described 'genius' (cf Brandon) thinks that a father is 'a reality-concealing machine', someone who betrays the 'glory' represented by the sea, and therefore is himself deserving of literal castration, or worse ...

74. Britton, p. 78.

75. Ibid.

76. 'Hurry up and get yourself another fella'? Surely not.

77. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 265.

78. See Beeding, Chapter Eleven, for the scene between Murchison and Constance that most resembles their showdown in the film. Murchison's desk, as at some other points in the novel, here plays an integral part.

79. Britton, p. 77.

80. May Romm was one of Los Angeles's top psychiatrists, whose patients included David Selznick. See Leff, pp. 115-16. As for the matter of Dr Edwardes, the novel, Chapter Six, notes that he 'had set his face against the method of Freud' ...

81. What could be more 'Schopenhauerian' than these subjective-shots which keep reminding us that the ultimate knowable reality is referable to us, is in our own heads? Cf **The Birds**, where a frightened mother addresses the camera and says she thinks **we** are 'evil - the cause of all this'. Of course, unknowingly, and yet quite properly, she is also addressing Will itself, the Will that flows though each of us, the blind Will that causes all suffering. Both ways, the fault is 'in ourselves' - and the effect that Hitchcock achieves with such an accusation directed at the audience is the more unsettling for striking to the very core of a paradox, one whereby our **intellectual** separation from the Will which is in us merely compounds the alleged evil. (Here, Hitchcock approaches Kafka, shorn of the specific apparatus of the State. Cf some of my remarks on **The Wrong Man**, in 'MacGuffin' 6.)

82. This unpleasant-sounding moment is certainly not in prints of **Spellbound** shown on Australian TV.

83. A word about detachment. My yoga teacher, Shri Yogendra, emphasised to his students the importance of detachment. But I recognise that it's much more of a major goal in the East than in the West. Edmund White, Chapter Six, has a fascinating passage on Hinayana Buddhism and how an 'emptying out' or 'annihilation' is what the life-seeking Christian most dreads - whereas it's what the Buddhist would most earnestly crave 'if craving itself were not precisely what must be extirpated'. In Hitchcock's case, I think he used his art-cum-sublimation to both have his cake and eat it: cf my remarks in 'MacGuffin' 12, p.5, on how his (Buddha-like!) detachment was probably a powerful factor in freeing his 'negative capability'. A corollary of this observation is how the films themselves may be seen, very often, to both give the viewer more 'life' and yet, simultaneously, mock it. Thus **North by Northwest** ends with Eve Kendall's remark, 'Oh, Roger, this is silly!' and his reply, 'I know, but I'm sentimental' - where 'sentimental' may be read as a euphemism for 'libidinous' ...

84. Dopagne, in his Introduction, speaks of Dali as having been a child prodigy 'deprived of his real personality' - leading to 'his deep-seated exhibitionism, his dandyism, his urge for depersonalisation ...'. **Hitchcock**'s dandyism is described in Thomas Elsaesser's "The Dandy in Hitchcock", in 'MacGuffin' 14.

85. **Marienbad**, of course, acknowledges Hitchcock in an early scene where the director of **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** may be glimpsed as a cardboard effigy in the hotel's foyer. (Presumably a Hitchcock film was going to be shown to the guests.)

Notes for "Engendering the Truth about 'Vertigo'" - carried over from 'MacGuffin' 17

60. Ibid, p. 129. 61. Ibid. 62. Ibid, p. 145. 63. Ibid, p. 177. 64. Ibid, p. 178. 65. Ibid, p. 189. 66. Ibid, p. 192. 67. Ibid.

68. Ibid, pp. 198, 203. 69. Ibid, p. 196. 70. Ibid, p. 202. 71. Ibid. 72. Ibid. 73. Ibid, p. 203. 74. Ibid, p. 215. 75. Ibid, p. 217.

76. "Engendering ...", p. 37.

77. In a separate article, "Murder in a Small Town", in this issue of 'The MacGuffin', I comment about the admired British detective- and crime-story writer, A.B. Cox/'Francis Iles' (1893-1970), that one of his perennial subjects was the extreme rarity of a happy marriage. Hitchcock filmed Iles's 'Before the Fact' as **Suspicion** (1941), and directed a radio dramatisation of his 'Malice Aforethought' in 1945.

78. Jacobi, p. 124. **Mutatis mutandis** re **Vertigo**, of course. See also notes 80 and 81 below.

79. For **Vertigo**'s 'historical' context, in a fairly literal sense of the term, see Robert J. Corber, 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (1993), Chapter 5 - and my review of it in this 'MacGuffin'.

80. Simenon, p. 182. Is this 'Wagnerian' at all? Cf 'MacGuffin' 11.

81. This last matter seems to me to invite an analogy between the cinema experience (which, regardless of its particular content, always needs someone to switch the film projector on and off) and the indeterminate objectivity/subjectivity (that condition to which we're all subject!) of our experience generally. If that sounds 'vertiginous', just remember that only in 'the world of eternity' are 'all the opposites ... transcended'!

82. "Engendering ...", p. 43. 83. Ibid, p. 31.

84. Corber, p. 173, has a theory - discussed elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin' - that at the start of **Vertigo** Scottie 'simultaneously fears and desires ... relinquishing his duties as an officer of the law'. Poague could tell you that for much of **It's A Wonderful Life** Stewart is already playing a very discontented fellow indeed. But I think perhaps the best parallel to

draw concerning Scottie's situation in **Vertigo** is with that of John Robie (Cary Grant) in **To Catch a Thief** (1955) - someone else who was once good, indeed the best, in his chosen field, but who is afterwards forced to live in exile from his former haunts until circumstances summon him back for a second chance to prove himself and clear his name.

85. "Engendering ...", p. 44.

86. For more about a desire to escape (the restrictions and suffering in) the world, see 'MacGuffin' 11. There, I note such a theme in Poe - who was another mother-obsessed artist ...

87. Cf 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 10 (re an aspect of Cavell's discussion of **North by Northwest** in 'A Hitchcock Reader', 1986, co-edited by Leland Poague).

88. "Engendering ...", p. 50. 89. Ibid, p. 46.

90. Cavell, quoted by Poague in "Engendering ...", p. 21. Adrian Martin's 1993 article on **Notorious** (which I once enthused about to Poague in a leter), itself noted how that Hitchcock film of 1946 combined motifs described by Cavell and Rothman in relation to the genres of 'remarriage comedy' and 'the melodrama of the unknown woman'. See Martin, p. 17 (and cf note 14 above).

91. Poague writes: 'Though Cavell avows a specific loyalty to the transcendental romanticism of Emerson and Thoreau, it is his general claim that romanticism - as represented by such as Descartes and Kant and Rousseau and Nietzsche (in philosophy) and Shakespeare and Coleridge and Poe and Kleist (in literature) - fully anticipates the critique of culture undertaken more recently in the work of (in the names of) Marx and Freud, Lacan and Derrida.' ("Engendering ...", p. 19) Cf my own 'specific loyalty' to Schopenhauer (and to my training in yoga, incorporating elements of both East and West, under Shri Vijayadev Yogendra) which seems to me so relevant to a full appreciation of (the works of) Hitchcock and Dickens, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Freud and Jung, Lacan and (God help us) Slavoj Zizek. Re that last pairing, see my review of Zizek's 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)', in 'MacGuffin' 10, pp. 3-13.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

The Mountain Eagle reconstructed; "What's so troubling about **Harry?**"; the sources of **Rear Window**; book reviews (incl. of 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**'); "Melody and Murder". Plus the usual features, incl. 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted.

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Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Vertigo** (number 17), **Foreign Corespondent** (16), **Spellbound** (15), Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14), **Young and Innocent** (13), **The Paradine Case** (12), **Vertigo** (11), **Notorious** (10), **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). These are the issues most recommended.

ODD SPOT: 'THE BIRDS' FOR REAL

According to an item on the Internet, only two Bodega Bay buildings used in Hitchcock's **The Birds** (1963) still stand: the old Potter Schoolhouse, which had been slated for demolition when Hitchcock came on it, and the farmhouse of the farmer who was pecked to death.

The other farmhouse, the home of the Brenners in the film, was rented by the filmmakers from a Rose Gaffney. It was actually just an old shack for which the film crew fabricated a facade and added out-buildings. Unfortunately these structures burnt down in the late '60s.

Bodega Bay is north of San Francisco. But the real-life genesis of Hitchcock's film, it appears, dates back to an incident in 1961 at the small coastal town of Rio del Mar, near Santa Cruz, south of San Francisco. After hordes of crazed birds had pecked eight people, smashed into houses and cars, and staggered around vomiting pieces of anchovy over lawns, the local newspaper received a call for clippings from Hitchcock, who was living in nearby Scotts Valley at the time. Apparently he'd just read Daphne du Maurier's short story 'The Birds' while researching possible material for the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series on TV ...

Footnote. Dr David Garrison, a marine biologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, recently isolated a poisonous algae in the corpses of hundreds of dead birds that had become 'intoxicated' after gorging on algae-infected anchovies in nearby Monterey Bay in 1991. He points out that the 1961 incident at Rio del Mar occurred at the right time for such algae to have been 'blooming'.

For further information: (1) http://www.bodegabay.com/features/birds.html; (2) 'Fortean Times' (UK), October/November, 1995, p. 10.

'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. For support, we thank both Richard Booth's Bookshop and the Old Cinema Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye, Wales. This issue printed by TS Press, Collingwood, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 19 | May 1996 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

AFTER WRITING my long - some have said '*over*-long'! - analysis of *The Manxman* last time, I turned to reading Janet Leigh's diverting book on *Psycho*. On page 60, screenwriter Joseph Stefano answers a question that someone put to him at a film festival recently: why does he always seem to want to show a person alone? Marion Crane, for example?

Stefano's answer is, in a word, that we're all alone anyway. He adds that the best plot - 'the only thing that makes fire' - is one that brings together two lonely people, whereupon you've got at least the potential for love.

I think Stefano's idea must have impressed Hitchcock, because most of Hitchcock's films from *Psycho* onwards feature that very situation. Indeed, I've noted before in 'The MacGuffin' how a chill wind literally blows through all of these films, up to and including *Torn Curtain*, as if to emphasise that the characters are assailed by a cosmic loneliness.

So I was gratified to read what Stefano said - especially as I knew that my *Manxman* article had specifically claimed of *Marnie* that it 'examines what it means to be alone in the universe' ('MacGuffin' 18, p. 10). And now let me say this. Sure, that analysis of mine last time *was* rather attenuated. For one thing, it was written under trying conditions as I struggled to learn from scratch, and without going batty, how to operate a computer *and* to connect to the Internet! (More on the rewards of that exciting place shortly.) Also, I'd add that *The Manxman* isn't one of Hitchcock's most brilliant or wittiest films - merely a splendidly crafted and serious one ...

But equally, I'd defend in general the long analyses that appear in most issues of 'The MacGuffin' - this issue is an exception, with *no* really long articles - on at least a couple of grounds. Until recently, there was a dearth of detailed analyses of Hitchcock's films, despite the pioneering work done in that direction by Robin Wood and others from the 1960s onwards. Even now, many of the films continue to be unjustly neglected or taken for granted.. And further, it seems to me almost axiomatic that film analysis generally is still lacking a 'holistic' approach based on a desire to see films *clearly* and *justly*, as things that have both a determinable existence and (the best of them) a complex aesthetic life, regardless of prevailing Theory, or *any* theory except the very broadest ...

In future 'MacGuffins', I may elaborate on what I've just said. As for my article on *The Manxman* last time, I only really regret one passage: namely, the one where, at the top of page 18, I spoke of 'a succession of seven shots' of rocks down which Kate (Anny Ondra) hastens on her way to an assignation with Phil (Malcolm Keen). I was in fact quoting the number of the shots here from a passage in Maurice Yacowar's 'Hitchcock's British Films' (1977). But I did it in a very lazy manner. As it stands, what I wrote has little meaning: the exact number of the shots is immaterial until it's given an interpretation, which is just what I neglected to provide! And not merely *any* interpretation, of course, but rather an informed and thoughtful one! Attempting that now, I'd first say that the point of these seven shots is to emphasise 'rockiness' as a quality. In turn, what needs to be noted is the turnaround from the earlier, idyllic Sulby Glen scene (though I did at least mention that in my analysis). The whole effect has poignancy, both because of Kate's sheer persistence (compare, say, the ambience of the cliffhanging, rocky climax of *North by Northwest*) and because her optimism here is about to be dashed (by the news of Pete's return, which puts her relationship with Phil on hold, if not in total jeopardy).

* * *

Janet Leigh's '*Psycho*: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Thriller' is reviewed in this 'MacGuffin' by Charles Silet of Iowa State University. Professor Silet recently edited a comprehensive collection of essays and reviews on *Psycho*, and he contributed an article on *The 39 Steps* to 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986).

Dr Greg Garrett, of Baylor University, Texas, has written us an overview of the recent Hitchcock Conference held in Austin. It's an authoritative report, because Dr Garrett was the Conference Organiser - and is an expert on the work of screenwriter Ernest Lehman.

J. Lary Kuhns of California figures prominently in this issue. His paper delivered at the Hitchcock Conference forms the basis of our article, "More on *The Mountain Eagle*", and there are several scholarly notes from Lary in our 'Letters' section.

Another authoritative article is provided by Evan Williams, writing on "Melody and Murder". Evan knows his movies - he's a film reviewer for 'The Australian' newspaper - and also his music: his collection of recordings, CDs, and books on music and musicology is extensive. Evan wrote the appreciation in 'MacGuffin' 9 of *The Lady Vanishes*.

So you think you know your Hitchcock? Then turn to the giant Hitchcock crossword compiled by Patrik Wikström (who recently travelled from his home in Sweden to attend the Hitchcock Conference in Texas). You may just discover a few gaps in your knowledge!

Featured in our 'News' section this time is a report on the ambitious 'Hollywood Film Masters' multimedia project recently launched on the World Wide Web. The particular module called 'MultiMedia Hitchcock' should be completed by the end of the year, and is extremely exciting. For providing us with information about the project, we thank Professor Robert Kapsis of the City University of New York, and the Assistant Project Director, Kathie Coblentz.

* * *

Indeed, hearty thanks to all the people named above for their contributions in this issue, and to the many people whose letters (and/or email messages) figure in our 'Letters' section. And be sure to read Tina Kaufman's insider's-view of the Australian film scene (see 'Oz-report') plus an interview from 1971 with Hitchcock on the set of *Frenzy*. I find Hitch's reluctance to adopt a moral position - commented on by the interviewer, Dennis Barker - most revealing.

Lastly, please don't forget that the 'MacGuffin' Web Page is now up and running, and should become increasingly content-rich. You can email us, if you wish, with your comments! See our Web- and email-addresses elsewhere in this issue.

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. Hope you like this first of our 'MacGuffins' to be produced using computer software. I'll try and refine details of the layout, etc., in future issues. Speaking of which ... the next issue, due in August, may be a little late. There's a lot on my plate at present. But I'll still try and get out two more issues this year.

LETTERS

'MacGuffin' 18

Mia Porvaznik, Epping, New South Wales, Australia

Having recently seen *The Manxman* for the first time, let me say how much I enjoyed your article.

(Editor's note. Thanks, Mia. And now, the next letter is from Philip Kemp, whose article in the same issue, "Hitching Posts", I took some small exception to - and was criticised by one or two people for my pains!)

* * *

Philip Kemp, London, England

I wasn't in the least annoyed, nor even mildly irritated, by your comments on my article - they seemed to be well within the accepted limits of critical give-and-take. I don't think I've ever been labelled an empiricist before, but I certainly don't object - if anything I feel quite chuffed, rather like M. Jourdain on being told he's been speaking prose all these years.

As far as Hitch and documentary goes, I think for me the fact that he shot most of the *Manxman* exteriors in Cornwall pretty well clinches it. Even Robert Flaherty, though an awful old fraud in many ways, wouldn't have tried to shoot *Man of Aran* in the Isle of Wight. I know you go on to say that Hitch's films 'embrace a kind of documentary ... conceived on a vaster scale', but to me this is pure Humpty-Dumpty argument - if you use a word to mean just what you choose it to mean, you can prove pretty well anything you like. Expand the term 'documentary' the way you do, and you've got a bag capacious enough to cram in everything from *The Wizard of Oz* to *Reservoir Dogs*.

As for *Waltzes from Vienna*, I'd love to know on what grounds [J. Lary Kuhns] would defend it. On the basis, admittedly, of a sole viewing some years back, I would stand by every word (all 20 or so) I wrote about it. It's vapid trash, and Hitch clearly knew it and was beyond caring. There's not even the sense that he was having fun sending it up, as there is with the cheerful hokum of *Number Seventeen*. Hitch himself, as you know, called it the 'low ebb of my career', and I can't see much reason to disagree.

At the time you recently wrote to me, I hadn't seen *The Pleasure Garden*, but I have now, thanks to that NFT season you mention. [See 'News' in this issue - Ed.] In answer to your question [prompted by a description of the film in Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock'], I don't think there's a snake in the credits, though there is a highly-decorated capital P with lots of sinuous foliage (a motif repeated on all the intertitles) that might easily be mistaken for a snake. But I can't be 100% sure because as luck would have it some idiot latecomer caused all the row in front of me to stand up just as it was starting.

That apart, the film was a delight, and a fascinating contrast with *The Blackguard*. Cutts's film [on which Hitchcock wrote the scenario, designed the sets, and was Assistant Director] *looked* terrific, with lavish UFA sets and fine chiaroscuro lighting. But the narrative pace, especially in the first half, was woefully sluggish, and Cutts seemed terrified of moving his camera, preferring to cut clumsily within scenes. (Which is odd, because when I saw Cutts's *The Rat*, made the same year, I was impressed with the fluid camerawork.) After that, *The Pleasure Garden* arrived as a breath of fresh air - bouncy, cheeky, inventive, with lots of witty angles and camera movements. The later scenes (Miles Mander going twitchily loony in darkest Africa) piled on the melodrama to excess, but the earliest part of the film, in and around the music-hall venues, has an engaging freshness. In fact I preferred it (sacrilege!) to *The Lodger*, which while quite clearly the ur-Hitch movie with all his obsessions up and running, has always struck me as a little self-consciously arty.

(Editor's note. Great letter. Thanks, Philip. On Hitch's use of 'documentary' in his films, I'd simply reiterate my point about how he sought to be 'comprehensive' in a way that I really don't think is shared by *The Wizard of Oz*, *Reservoir Dogs*, et al. But now let's hear what Lary Kuhns has to say about *Waltzes From Vienna*.)

* * *

Waltzes From Vienna

J. Lary Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

Years ago, I read somewhere that *Waltzes From Vienna* was applauded when shown at New York's Museum of Modern Art. I myself thought, when I saw it: Wow! There's Jessie Matthews! Isn't she great! And, look, there's Ramon [Frank Vosper], the gunman in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, playing the part of the Prince! And how about the *MWKTM* orchestral ending! And Hitchcock's ideas for integrating the creation of the Waltz with the bake-shop sounds and rhythms were pretty novel. What fun, and what a feast for the Hitchcock scholar! During dinner at the recent Hitchcock Conference in Austin, Texas [see report in this issue - Ed.], I discussed this with Sidney Gottlieb and Jane Sloan. They both said how much they enjoyed the film. Then I asked Professor Gottlieb why he had put it down in his Hitchcock book, and he seemed genuinely surprised that he had!

A further point of interest. Charles Bennett [Hitch's principal screenwriter at the time] has said that *TMWKTM* was completely designed - on paper - before *WFV*. Therefore, the film occurs creatively between *TMWKTM* and *The 39 Steps*. Stylistically, that is evident.

(Editor's note. Later in this section are several other informative letters from Lary Kuhns, including one on *The Blackguard*, mentioned by Philip Kemp. Though films like *The Blackguard*, *Waltzes From Vienna* and *The Pleasure*

Garden, of which an American print turned up in Texas a few years ago, receive occasional public screenings, most of us miss out on seeing them. Our next correspondent, a respected writer and film-collector, voices my own thoughts exactly!)

* * *

Make classic films available

Leslie Shepard, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Irish Republic

It seems to me so unfair that all over the world, film archives have all the key material in their vaults, taken out very rarely for those people who can get to special Film Festivals, or for showing to a favoured few, while people like you and I and (I'm sure) quite a number of others are desperate to see such things before we pass on to that Great Cinema in the Skies. Meanwhile, we are fed the latest sleazy sex, violence, and four-letter-word blockbusters on television and video, or other quite nondescript, best-forgotten ephemera ...

I have begged the British Film Institute/National Film Archive to consider subscription issues of classic films, especially silents like the early Hitchcocks, having regard to the specialised interest in silent films [but to little avail so far].

(Editor's note. For what it's worth, in Australia the video-release of several quite esoteric foreign and classic films, originally shown here by the Special Broadcasting Service, seems to have met with some success.)

* * *

'MacGuffin' 17

Ed Maslow, New York City, New York, USA

Loved your 'MacGuffin' 17. Please send me back-issues: #16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, and 8.

* * *

Adrian Martin, Ashburton, Victoria, Australia

I had a very good time reading ['MacGuffin' 17]. I got a great deal out of your article in response to Professor Poague's analysis of *Vertigo*. Obviously, the Simenon connection you have uncovered is an important point of scholarship. I haven't seen Poague's piece, by the way: the Australian Film Institute library only has the '92 and '93 editions of the 'Hitchcock Annual'. I must say, Poague's essay seems to gather the traits that I most dislike in the work of Cavell and Rothman - and especially in the almost religiously fanatical exegetes/slaves of Cavell!

At any rate, there are certainly some ripe moments of lunacy in the old Harvard school. I like a lot of Cavell, in fact, but generally not his comments on genre and generic formation - which seem to be plain silly, 'blessing' half a dozen key films when approximately 500 could be usefully brought into the discussion. (This was the thrust of David Thompson's brilliant reflection on 'Pursuits of Happiness' in a mid-80s 'Film Comment'.) Popular genres, as we sensible people know, are just not that pure as to allow only a minuscule canon. Every plot, character-type, bundle of plot situations, theme, motif, etc., bleeds and leaks right across the genres, transforming itself in diverse and surprising ways as it goes.

* * *

Lesley Brill, Department of English, Wayne State University, College of Liberal Arts, Detroit, Michigan, USA

Your recent meditations on Leland Poague's *Vertigo* article, though you raise some plausible points, needed more argument and less assertion, I felt. I was dismayed that you chose to dismiss Stanley Cavell and William Rothman as 'self-centred or arrogant' - an *ad hominem* aside that is unjust, inaccurate, and irrelevant. Moreover, anyone who read Professor Cavell's temperate reply to Tania Modleski's self-serving, anti-intellectual attack in 'Critical Inquiry' would be likelier to suppose him too courteous than the contrary. His writing, indeed, can be difficult; but I am convinced that the originality and complexity of his ideas, not any penchant for self-indulgence, account for that quality.

(Editor's note. I thank Professor Brill for his comments. Still, I feel slightly nonplussed to hear that I was too assertive - not just because my article did, after all, have 91 footnote-references, but also because the narrow assertiveness of much

Western critical writing was precisely what my article was concerned to spotlight and critique! In turn, my belief in the possibility of a more 'holistic' and immediate kind of perception is a main reason why a 'complexity of ... ideas' may leave me rather cold. I'd like to think that I follow Roger Bacon in this: 'Cease to be ruled by dogmas and authorities; look at the world!' Or Nietzsche's 'The Birth of Tragedy': 'We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics when we have succeeded in perceiving directly, and not only through logical reasoning ... '. Specifically, I do indeed find such scholars as Cavell and Rothman to be 'often self-centred or arrogant' - but please note my use of 'often', i.e. I didn't *altogether* 'dismiss' their work - and prefer instead the writings of such exemplary stylists as Camille Paglia, in aesthetics, and Bryan Magee, in philosophy. Both of the latter are so continually perceptive and considerate of the reader that, at any given moment, they write both beautifully and simply.)

* * *

J. Lary Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

I don't know why you should think that [Jane] Sloan's idea of what Hitchcock was carrying in *Vertigo* is more valid than yours ('MacGuffin' 17, p. 23). Maybe it *is* a coal scuttle. And I hope it is. Like What's-her-Name [Lady Bracknell - Ed.!] in 'The Importance of Being Earnest' who has never seen a spade, I, as a Californian, have never seen a coal scuttle.

* * *

'MacGuffin' 16, and notes on a theme of Blake Edwards

John J. Trause, Wood-Ridge, New Jersey, USA

Thank you for 'MacGuffin' 16, which I enjoyed as usual. Your ability to write cogently about each film and to gather incidental material impresses me.

Let me share with you two notes of mine that my sister developed for a paper in a film class at college:

- The cat and dog theme in Blake Edwards's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961): Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) is represented by a cat, and Paul Varjack (George Peppard) is represented by a dog, and each has to break out of certain patterns associated with each animal to create by the end of the film the union demanded by the genre of Romantic comedy. This animal symbolism is not developed in Truman Capote's novella of the same name on which the film is based.
- The stealing of the cat and dog masks from the Woolworth's store by Holly and Paul, with the cool jazzy score on the soundtrack and the stylised movement, and a nun in full habit visible in the background, is echoed later in Richard Brooks's 1966 film version of Capote's 'In Cold Blood' - where Perry (Robert Blake), who professes to find nuns bad luck, also steals from a convenience store, and where there's a jazzy score on the soundtrack and the presence of nuns in the following scene. One wonders whether there was a conscious effort by somebody at linking these two films based on books by Capote, or whether a generic convention for certain films of the era set patterns for the use of such jazz scores and stylised movements.

(Editor's note. I'd plump for the latter. It may have a lot to do with a deliberate contrast of ambiences: scenes of high jinx or amorality versus a certain staidness or piety represented by nuns/a nun. For a comic variant, think of the 'trampolining nuns' routine in Stanley Donen's 1967 *Bedazzled*! Further thoughts, anyone?)

* * *

On Capra and Preston Sturges

Tom Ryan, Windsor, Victoria, Australia

Saw *It's a Wonderful Life* again today - as part of the course I'm giving this semester ('Roads, Smalltowns, and American Dreams') - and you're right to call it [in a letter I wrote to Tom - Ed.] a Christmas film, although it ends with a chorus of 'Auld Lang Syne' (sung around a Christmas tree, no less - Hollywood's always been good at such compression). It's remarkable, by the way, how structurally like *Sullivan's Travels* Capra's film is: both with their remarkably modernist trappings, both with driven, flawed heroes who are cast into oblivion (one 'dying', the other obliterated from his existence) before being resurrected for a scene of communal reconciliation. I make the connection only because our class looked at *Sullivan's Travels* last week.

* * *

On *Dial M For Murder*, 'Four O'Clock', and favourite films

Nicholas Anez, Warwick, Rhode Island, USA

I believe the first Hitchcock movie I saw was *Dial M For Murder*. I would call this a perfect movie; while it may not be a 'classic', it is an excellent example of Hitchcock's mastery of the art of filmmaking; also, due largely to the differences in characterisation Hitchcock brought to the film, it is far superior to the play and, of course, to the terrible TV remake. Even in its 'flat' version, I can watch it repeatedly. But to fully appreciate the movie, and Hitchcock's artistry, it should be seen in 3D. A few years ago, the Film Forum theatre in New York presented an engagement of what is reportedly Warner Brothers' only existing double-system 'NaturalVision' print of the movie (not to be confused with the single-projector 3D reissue of the '80s, which was notably inferior), and it was a memorable experience.

I have seen all of the episodes Hitchcock personally directed for 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour', but I have been unable to view the one-hour episode of the TV show 'Suspicion' entitled 'Four O'Clock' that Hitchcock directed in 1957. As you are probably aware, this is based on the Cornell Woolrich story, 'Three O'Clock'. In his biography of the writer, 'Cornell Woolrich: First You Dream, Then You Die' (1988), author Francis Nevins Jr describes the telefilm as 'an absolute masterwork ... the most unremittingly suspenseful picture in the director's long career.' According to the Hitchcock estate, MCA owns the film; MCA never replied to my query concerning its availability. Have you ever seen this film? Do you know if it is available on video or if it has been presented on any cable or local station?

Here's my list of best movies (though the positions of the films in it may change upon re-viewing).

1. *Vertigo*
2. *The Searchers*
3. *Shane*
4. *Double Indemnity*
5. *In a Lonely Place*
6. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*
7. *Notorious*
8. *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*
9. *Shadow of a Doubt*
10. *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure*
11. *How Green Was My Valley*
12. *Wyatt Earp*
13. *Psycho*
14. *The Best Years of Our Lives*
15. *Dracula* (1958)/US title: *Horror of Dracula*
16. *Out of the Past*
17. *Warlock* (1959)
18. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)
19. *Ride the High Country*
20. *Lawrence of Arabia*
21. *The Great Escape*
22. *Cape Fear* (1962)
23. *North by Northwest*
24. *Odd Man Out*
25. *Touch of Evil*

(Editor's note. At this point, I've had to cut Nick off - his list adds about another hundred titles. Sorry, Nick! It's an interesting and thoughtful list, though. Now, to your queries. The situation regarding all works based on the writings of Cornell Woolrich is at present complicated by a decision handed down in the US Supreme Court in October 1989, in the case *Stewart v. Abend*. MCA are being very coy about their own rights to such Woolrich-based works as *Rear Window*. Take a look at Ronald Dale Garmon's article, "Stalking the Blue-Chip Nightmare: The Two Legacies of Cornell Woolrich", in 'Scarlet Street' #21, Winter 1996, pp. 53-54, 56, 104. That's the excellent Hitchcock-issue of 'Scarlet Street', by the way. And, no, I've not seen Hitchcock's 'Four O'Clock', only a more recent TV remake. And I've read Woolrich's story,

naturally. It's very good. In the matter of Hitchcock and 3D, I see from the World Wide Web that the Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, are showing footage from *The Birds* which they say was shot in 3D but not included in the film itself. Do any of our readers have more details?)

* * *

Kuhns on *The Blackguard* and *The Prude's Fall*

J. Lary Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

You mention [in an email message - Ed.] that *The Blackguard* has turned up in London. *The Blackguard* is the film for which Hitchcock had to cut down Fritz Lang's *Siegfried* forest on the huge UFA stage to make a great staircase going up to heaven. (See Patrick Humphries's 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock', p. 17, for a photo - an interesting book, by the way.) It's the fourth film of the five Cutts-Hitchcock movies. It starred Jane Novak, a beautiful blonde American star of Western movies. She also starred in the last Cutts-Hitchcock film, *The Prude's Fall*. Later, she appeared in *Foreign Correspondent* as the screaming woman who suffers that horrible claustrophobic drowning in the clipper crash.

The filmography goof that puts Betty Compson in *The Prude's Fall* dates from [Peter Noble's 'BFI Index to the Work of Alfred Hitchcock', 1949], and persists to [Jane Sloan's 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Definitive Filmography', 1995]. I believe I can explain how this might have come about. 'The Prude's Fall' was a popular play in the early '20s that had a long run in London (September 1920 - March 1921). It was produced by and featured Gerald du Maurier (father of Daphne, and famous actor-manager who - as 'The MacGuffin' once pointed out - was the prototype of Sir John in *Murder!*). The play was by Rudolf Besier, of 'The Barretts of Wimpole Street' fame, and May Edginton. Michael Balcon must have obtained the film rights. Anyway, the first Cutts-Hitchcock film was *Woman to Woman* with Betty Compson. It was a great success. Compson was under contract for two films. Upon completion of *Woman to Woman* she had to be rushed into another production. 'The Picturegoer' of September 1923 indicates that *The Prude's Fall* was planned as this second production, but this was cancelled and she instead made the Cutts-Hitchcock film called *The White Shadow*, about twin sisters. (Betty Compson later appeared as Robert Montgomery's date at the Florida Club in *Mr and Mrs Smith*.) The third Cutts-Hitchcock film was *The Passionate Adventure*, the fourth *The Blackguard*, and the fifth *The Prude's Fall*. As I announced in my paper on *The Mountain Eagle* at the Hitchcock Conference, *The Prude's Fall* was shown in America under the title *Dangerous Virtue*.

As for Jane Novak, her filmography tells us that she died in 1990, just a few years ago, here in Woodland Hills where I live. How interesting it would have been to talk to her.

* * *

And Kuhns on *The Wrong Man*

I have observed an oddity about *The Wrong Man*. Although the film is based upon a true event, it has perhaps the most bizarre and unrealistic thing to be found in any Hitchcock film. (I don't mean the prayer sequence, although that too is unique, with the possible exception of the dog's ESP in *Secret Agent*.) Recall the beautiful opening, serving as the background for the credits, showing the passage of time in the Stork Club. (By the way, isn't that a master-touch when the waiter yawns at Hitchcock's name?) The sequence ends with Balestrero finishing up work and entering the ominous New York night dominated by the figures of two policemen. Now recall the central figure earlier in the sequence - the blonde woman so elegantly dressed dining with her friends. Well, the same shot set-up, of the group of diners, appears later, about 70 minutes into the film. This brings about what physicists call a 'closed causal chain' (the basis of time-travel stories). I always find this extremely disturbing in the film. Or did the Director just think the woman so beautiful that the audience would like to see her again?

(Editor's note. I believe many of our readers would agree with me that the recurring moment Lary Kuhns describes here isn't the only eerie passage in this strange and admirable Hitchcock film. Of course, at a mundane level, many people *do* have their favourite seat at a particular restaurant, to which they come back each time they visit. Indeed, I think I've read that Hitchcock himself was such a person, and moreover that the Stork Club was his favourite New York eating-place. But in *this* film, where habit and routine are part of the film's very subject, the shot has certainly an especial significance. By the way, it's also strange in this context that Lary Kuhns should raise the matter of the telepathic dog in *Secret Agent*. That idea must have appealed to Hitchcock, an animal-lover, from when he evidently first read it in G.K. Chesterton's 'The Oracle of the Dog', printed in the collection called 'The Incredulity of Father Brown', which was published in 1923. And speaking of animals, that's part of the implicit subject of our next letter ...)

* * *

A certain predilection for Schopenhauer ...

Evan Williams, Killara, New South Wales, Australia

Of course I have always been aware of your Schopenhauer affinity, and it intrigues me. I can't say I know much about his philosophy, but what I remember is very much to my taste, particularly the idea of the inter-connectedness of all living things - since unless this is so, it seems to me we are driven back to a kind of solipsism, which I think is a form of insanity.

* * *

Torn Curtain

Patrik Wikström, Västerhaninge, Sweden

Yes, Hitch directed a few scenes in Sweden at the end of *Torn Curtain*. The photographer who runs after Professor Armstrong and Miss Sherman is a well-known Swedish actor and singer called Jan Malmsjö.

* * *

Rebuffed again!

Fiona Bolt, Periodicals Librarian, Library and Information Services, British Film Institute, London, England

Thank you for your recent letter. As I have already explained in earlier correspondence, ... [a]lthough we quite agree that ['The MacGuffin'] is a good source of information on the work of Hitchcock it is against our selection policy to take journals dealing with the work of any individual. This policy was recently reviewed and it was strongly felt that we should continue to adhere to this criterion. We receive other magazines approaching the calibre of 'The MacGuffin', dedicated to such figures as Chaplin, and they have been rejected on the same grounds.

I certainly do not 'discount' your journal, however, practical acquisition restrictions make it unsuitable for our collection.

(Editor's note. So much for the 'holism' of our attempt to locate Hitchcock's work in the widest possible context, going way beyond just film. Clearly the BFI feels that we're still too parochial! Of more immediate concern to me is simply the fact that 'The MacGuffin' remains unavailable - indeed virtually unknown - to film scholars in England, i.e. Hitchcock's home country. I'm an egregious enough editor to think that a pity.)

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Hitchcock Conference in Austin, Texas, a success

About 100 Hitchcock fans, of many types and ages, attended the Hitchcock Conference held at the Sheraton Austin on March 22-24. See Dr Greg Garrett's report elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin'.

Dr Garrett, the Conference Organiser, tells us that the Conference's Web Page, maintained by Baylor University where he teaches, will soon carry news about some forthcoming publications, and in addition will digitise video of the Conference - probably of Robin Wood to start with. Wood gave the Keynote Address at the Conference, on the topic "Hitchcock and Fascism".

'Hollywood Film Masters': an exciting - and mammoth - multimedia undertaking is launched on the Web

Based at the City University of New York, and supervised by Professor Robert Kapsis, this ambitious project will document the work of seven film directors: Alfred Hitchcock, Clint Eastwood, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Robert Altman, Woody Allen, and Spike Lee. Though still very much a work in progress, with contributions promised from many noted collaborators, the project already maintains its own Web site (at <http://www.soc.qc.edu/MultiMedia/filmmasters.html>). Ultimately, the finished product will be available as a set of CD-ROMs or DVD discs designed for both scholarly and classroom use.

The project module closest to completion is 'MultiMedia Hitchcock: An Interdisciplinary Approach', which should be finished by the end of the year. A highlight will be the inclusion of significant portions of the 52 hours of interviews that Hitchcock gave to Truffaut in 1962. Both the Hitchcock estate and Universal Pictures readily granted Professor Kapsis and his team permission to use Hitchcock's papers - original production notes, scripts, correspondence, plans for publicity campaigns - as well as footage from several films.

The module has six thematic sections: 'Marketing Hitchcock', 'The Hitchcock Aesthetic', 'Critics' Voices', 'Genre and Society', 'The Legacy', and 'Archive'. The last-named will be accessible from every page of the module, and will constitute a huge research database consisting of reviews and commentaries on Hitchcock's key films and others (less exhaustively), as well as interviews, pressbooks, publicity material, script excerpts, box office figures, fan mail, and the like.

The section called 'The Hitchcock Aesthetic' looks especially exciting (to those of us so-minded!). Original contributions will probably include Sidney Gottlieb on "Early Hitchcock", Marian Keane and Deborah Linderman on "Dreams, Memories, and Living Nightmares", and Royal Brown illustrating the Hitchcock-Bernard Herrmann collaboration with the use of 'playable' musical examples, soundclips, and filmclips.

Summing up plans for 'MultiMedia Hitchcock', Professor Kapsis said: 'We intend [it] to become the most definitive and comprehensive statement to date in either electronic or printed media about [Hitchcock].'

'Gratuitously violent' film banned by Irish censor

By Michael Dwyer, Film Correspondent

A new film involving the *Pulp Fiction* director, Quentin Tarantino, has been banned by the film censor of the Republic of Ireland, Mr Sheamus Smith, because of what he termed 'totally gratuitous violence'. The screenplay of *From Dusk Till Dawn* was written by Tarantino, who also wrote *Natural Born Killers*, which was rejected by Mr Smith and by his country's Censorship of Films Appeals Board a year ago.

From Dusk Till Dawn features Quentin Tarantino and George Clooney, the star of the 'ER' television series, as brothers heading for a safe haven in Mexico after a bloody crime spree. It also features Harvey Keitel as a preacher who has lost his faith and is taken hostage by the brothers. The director is Robert Rodriguez, who made *El Mariachi* and *Desperado*.

Mr Smith, who generally does not explain publicly his reasons for rejecting films, told 'The Irish Times' he found the violence in *From Dusk Till Dawn* 'irresponsible and totally gratuitous' and said the film worried him in the light of the recent massacres in Dunblane and Port Arthur.

'Somebody has to say "stop" to this extraordinary violence on the screen. I admire Harvey Keitel and Quentin Tarantino, and I'm not saying everyone in Ireland would be affected by this film. But even if one person were affected, I wouldn't like to have it on my conscience.'

From Dusk Till Dawn is the first film to be rejected by Mr Smith since Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls* five months ago. That film was turned down chiefly because of a very violent rape scene.

- From 'The Irish Times on the Web'

Early Hitchcock film turns up in England

Actually, *The Blackguard* (1925) was found in Russia in 1992 and sent to England then. But Graham Cutts's film, on which Hitchcock worked as scenarist, set designer, and assistant-director, has only rarely been screened in public since it was found. One such screening took place in May as part of a National Film Theatre season of 'Early Hitchcock', held in

London. Other films screened included *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), *Downhill* (1927), both the silent and sound versions of *Blackmail* (1929), *Waltzes From Vienna* (1933), and both *Murder!* (1930) and its German version, *Mary/Sir John Greift Ein!*

The Blackguard was one of five films on which a young Hitchcock worked with veteran director Graham Cutts (1885-1958). It, too, was shot in Germany, at the UFA studios in Berlin. Critics of the period are said to have been less receptive to its love story of a gifted violinist and a Russian princess, than they were to its highly imaginative lighting and design. See also 'Letters' in this issue of 'The MacGuffin'.

Hitchcock voted best director ever

Just in case you haven't seen it - we meant to run this item some time ago - here's the result of a 1995 'Time Out' survey, based on a poll of 'international' directors, producers, actors, programmers, and critics, who were asked to nominate cinema high-points of the past 100 years.

Best film was voted to be *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), with runner-up *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1971/74/90). Voted best director was Alfred Hitchcock, and runner-up Orson Welles. Best actress was Katherine Hepburn (runner-up Barbara Stanwyck). Best actor was Marlon Brando (runner-up Cary Grant).

Publications

As a follow-up to the above, we note the recent publication of Peter Manso's 'Brando' (pb) and Barbara Leaming's 'Katherine Hepburn' (pb), both biographies. Meanwhile, Donald Spoto keeps on tossing off celebrity 'lives' with aplomb, most recently 'Rebel: The Life and Legend of James Dean' (HarperCollins). And here's how Spoto's 'Elizabeth Taylor' (pb) was reviewed in the latest newsletter issued by Abbey's Bookshop, Sydney: 'From the author of the fabulous "The Decline and Fall of the House of Windsor", comes another wonderfully written and captivating insight into the real life of a famous person. How on earth does he wangle this information?'

Abbey's Bookshop also recommends Simon Callow's 'Orson Welles - The Road to Xanadu' (pb), described as 'Tremendous fun to read. An actor's biography of an actor.' That estimation chimes nicely with what Sidney Gottlieb told us about his current reading (he's preparing his own new book, 'Welles on Welles'). He wrote: 'I'm just finishing David Thomson's new biography of Welles - not as interesting as Simon Callow's very thoughtful, informative and detailed recent volume (part 1 of 2).'

A Hitchcock publication of note is Paula Marantz Cohen's 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' (pb). It represents perhaps more of a missed opportunity - in a new area for Hitchcock books - than a total triumph, though Leonard Leff likes it. See 'Book Reviews' in this issue of 'The MacGuffin'.

We'd also mention, very favourably, the special Hitchcock issue (#21, Winter 1996) of 'Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror'. It includes interviews with Patricia Hitchcock, Farley Granger, and John Michael Hayes. An article by Richard Valley, the magazine's editor, reveals that Hitchcock took the climaxes of *Stage Fright* (1950) and *Strangers on a Train* (1951) from novels by 'Edmund Crispin'. And Ross Care reviews at length the recent release on CD (Turner/Rhino) of Bernard Herrmann's original score for *North by Northwest*. As there's to be further Hitchcock material in issue #22, a subscription may be indicated. This costs $20 (US) for 4 issues ($5.95 for a single issue). Write to: P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.

Patricia Warren's 'British Film Studios: An Illustrated History' (pb) has over 200 illustrations, many not previously published. The book is the first comprehensive and systematic history of British studios (over 90 are covered). David Kidd-Hewitt's 'Crime and the Media: The Post-Modern Spectacle' (pb) explores both real-life crime and crime as entertainment - two categories that are now so interdependent that the media itself is in danger of confusing them as it seeks to profit from their appeal.

Lastly, among the many recent feminist- and gender-theory titles, one we're pleased to note is 'Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Exploration' (pb), edited by Carol Adams. Its various essays explore the theoretical connection between feminism and animal-defence in our society. Would that Dr Barbara Creed had read it before she wrote her book called 'The Monstrous-Feminine', which we reviewed in 'MacGuffin' 14

Acquisitions

Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959) and Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) - it's probably not an incidental matter that both have Bernard Herrmann scores - are among 25 films recently honoured by the US Library of Congress for their impact on American culture.

The movies were added to the National Film Registry, a list Congress created in 1988 to celebrate American cinema and to draw attention to the need to preserve the US film heritage.

Among 175 movies already on the list are D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* (1942), and the Zapruder film, a bystander's 1963 home movie of the assassination of President Kennedy.

James Billington of the Library of Congress chose the new titles after reviewing about 1100 films nominated by the public. The registry lists only films made at least 10 years ago.

The remaining 23 movies added to the registry were *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), *All That Heaven Allows* (1955), *American Graffiti* (1973), *The Band Wagon* (1953), *Blacksmith Scene* (1893), *Cabaret* (1972), *Chan Is Missing* (1982), *The Conversation* (1974), *El Norte* (1983), *Fatty's Tintype Tangle* (1915), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), *Fury* (1936), *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951), *The Hospital* (1971), *Jammin' the Blues* (1944), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1920), *Manhattan* (1921), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *Rip Van Winkle* (1896), *Seventh Heaven* (1927), *Stagecoach* (1939), *To Fly* (1976), and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962).

Meanwhile, in Australia, Bruce Hodsdon of the National Library tells us that a technicolour print in mint condition of Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn* (1949) has now been added to the library's Films Collection. The rare original print came from a private collector. (By coincidence, a 'MacGuffin' reader in New Jersey wrote to us recently to say that he'd acquired for his personal collection several Hitchcock films on 35mm, most of them original IB Tech prints. At the top of his list was *Under Capricorn*.)

More on Stanley Kubrick's latest project/s

An AP wire of last December was apparently the first announcement of a change of plans by Kubrick. It seems he's now going to direct real-life supercouple Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman in *Eyes Wide Shut*, a story of jealousy and sexual obsession, for Warner Brothers. Filming is said to be due to start in London this (northern) summer.

The same wire added that Kubrick's previously-announced science-fiction film, *AI* (*Artificial Intelligence*) is in the final stages of set design and special-effects development, and will follow *Eyes Wide Shut*.

But there's a sidelight on *AI*'s state of progress. The Web site called 'Kubrick - A Multimedia Film Guide', which quotes the above information, also carries a message from 'Roger Mayer, V.P.@TurnerEntertainment'. The message reads: '*AI* was almost completed [in 1994]. However, Kubrick apparently decided to re-shoot all process shots after finally getting around to see *Jurassic Park*. Apparently he had (hard as it may be to believe) vastly under-estimated the ability of current digital image manipulation. He felt the process shots were very underwhelming. Once he began to reshoot, the narrative of the story began to change, and even more stuff was reshot to alter the story.'

Deaths of Saul Bass and William K. Everson

'The MacGuffin' laments the recent death of Saul Bass in Thailand, where he'd been living. As most of our readers know, the gifted graphics-designer and occasional director (shorts such as *Why Man Creates*, the feature *Phase IV*) not only designed the titles-sequences of several of Hitchcock's best films, such as *Vertigo*, but served as visual consultant on both *North by Northwest* and *Psycho* (and story-boarded the latter's shower sequence). In the '90s, Bass did fine work on the titles-sequences of Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas*, *Cape Fear*, and *The Age of Innocence*.

Eminent English-born, US-resident film historian, William Everson, has died after an illness. A friend, New York film academic Gene Stavis, recently described him on the Internet as 'a unique archivist, writer and teacher'.

Among the occasional pieces Everson wrote about Hitchcock is a little-known essay (not listed in Jane Sloan's Hitchcock Filmography/Bibliography) on *Number Seventeen* (1932) - it comes from Everson's longer piece, "Six Mystery Movies and

Their Makers", printed in Francis M. Nevins Jr (ed.), 'The Mystery Writer's Art' (1970), pp.180-95. The following is an excerpt:

> *Most of the Hitchcockian trademarks are here: the mixing of melodrama with urbane comedy, ultra-civilised villains, a smattering of piquant sex (the two leading ladies are regularly and thoroughly searched), even such standard Hitchcockian situations as the hero and heroine shackled together. The opening is typical of Hitchcock's contempt for logic if it serves no [script] purpose. It's a marvellously stylistic opening - howling wind, a hat blown away, feet running after it, hat and owner coming to rest outside a mysterious mansion, and curiosity drawing the man inside. Within a few moments, and with no time wasted, the plot is under way, visually and excitingly. What matter if, five reels later, we find out that he was going to the house anyway?* (p. 188)

Thoughts on 'The Late Alfred Hitchcock' Conference

By Greg Garrett, the Conference Organiser

One weekend last March, a hundred critics, scholars, students, filmmakers, and film-lovers gathered in Austin, Texas, to talk about Alfred Hitchcock. The conversation, spirited but always amiable, not only lasted all weekend but now extends off into the foreseeable future. Those conversing included towering figures of Hitchcock Past (Robin Wood, and, in spirit, Ernest Lehman) and Hitchcock Present (Leonard Leff, Thomas Leitch, David Sterritt), as well as the upcoming generation of Hitchcock scholars: graduate students representing schools as diverse as Yale University, Oklahoma State University, the University of Iowa, and my own Baylor University. Tossed into the mix were collectors and Hitchcock fans (one of whom came all the way from Sweden to attend) and film director Richard Linklater (*Slackers*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Before Sunrise*) and his crew, who came to hear Robin Wood speak at the Saturday afternoon screening of *North by Northwest*.

Wood was definitely worth hearing. Although in poor health - he had such a bad case of the flu the week of the Conference as to consider staying in Toronto - and more interested now in his fiction than in film scholarship, Wood was an active participant throughout the weekend, introducing the film screening, speaking up at the round-table discussion which closed the Conference on Sunday, and delivering the keynote address on Friday evening, on "Hitchcock and Fascism". While he remarked early on that he had 'nothing new to say' on the subject of Hitchcock, and his address was simply a reworking of his previous writing on the exercise of power, both institutional and sexual, his illustrative use of clips from *Saboteur*, *Lifeboat*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rope*, *Vertigo*, and *Marnie* demonstrated persuasively Hitchcock's ambivalence towards power and control: his desire to exercise it personally in his filmmaking, but also his awareness of the danger of too much control. It was a moving presentation from the man who has profoundly influenced many of us who study and write about Hitchcock, and his accessibility and friendliness were welcome adjuncts to his first-class mind.

Other presentations which stood out were Thomas Leitch's discussion of "The Hitchcock Moment", Sid Gottlieb's investigation of "The Hitchcock Kiss", Richard Allen's inventory of "Colour Design in Hitchcock's Films", and J. Lary Kuhns's reconstruction of *The Mountain Eagle* (1926) using newly-discovered stills. Leitch, author of 'Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games', attempted to define the 'Hitchcock moment' by comparing it with the 'moments' of quasi-Hitchcockian directors Brian De Palma and David Lynch (and he concluded, incidentally, that De Palma 'inherited Hitchcock's sense of malicious fun but not his emotional range', as good an explanation as I've heard as to why De Palma both appeals to and repels many lovers of Hitchcock). Leitch noted that in contemporary cinema, the 'Tarantino moment' is most similar to the 'Hitchcock moment', an interesting observation in light of the fact that Tarantino continued to pop up all weekend long in presentations and discussion.

Gottlieb, author of the newly-released 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', followed up on Leitch's idea by noting that the kiss is perhaps the most definitive of Hitchcock's moments, the most typical moment of stylistic excess, and he presented a convincing montage of scenes drawn from throughout the Hitchcock canon to accompany his assertion. He also argued that many of Hitch's films can be understood simply through the progression of kisses, that the kissing sequences may be removed from the film and still communicate the deep structure of the film, and he concluded that, in Hitchcock's films and possibly in life, 'We are how we kiss'.

Richard Allen presented a series of slides drawn primarily from *Marnie* and *The Birds* to illustrate his discussion of Hitchcock's meticulously planned use of colour in individual frames. While conceding his own selectivity in choosing his exemplary slides, Allen drew our attention to Hitchcock's use of yellow, orange, and red as danger signals, and Hitchcock's consistent use of black and white as masculine/feminine in choosing costume colours. In our viewing of *North by Northwest* following Allen's talk, we all - newly sensitised - noted how Allen's theses seemed to hold up.

Finally, J. Lary Kuhns talked us through his attempts to reconstruct the lost Hitchcock film, *The Mountain Eagle*. Although it is often said that only a handful of stills exist, Kuhns has discovered additional ones and showed them all, ordered as he thinks they were originally sequenced. This feat of detective work was widely appreciated, and represented a strain of Hitchcock scholarship that, while under-represented at the Conference, was mentioned as a growing necessity: archival research.

In my introduction to the Conference, I discussed the special Hitchcock-related holdings at the Ransom Humanities Centre in Austin: the gargantuan David O. Selznick Collection, employed (but not exhausted) by Leonard J. Leff in his tremendously enlightening 'Hitchcock and Selznick', and the Ernest Lehman Collection, which I have consulted in writing articles about Lehman's working relationship with Hitchcock and detailing the projects which the two men considered filming but, for one reason or another, did not. Leff's presentation, "Hitchcock, the Archives, and the Decade Ahead", urged further archival research and suggested possible avenues, including the comparison of Hitchcock's films and the radio shows based on those films. On the Sunday, in the round-table discussion, Leff also encouraged investigation of the Hollywood studio files related to Hitchcock's films, particularly the original audience response cards to Hitchcock previews.

On Sunday, during the round-table discussion, we agreed that we could not anticipate the direction Hitchcock studies might take in the next decade, despite the fact that bibliographer Jane Sloan, perhaps the person best-suited to see the shape of Hitchcock scholarship, was in attendance. It can be said that the papers presented in Austin represented a variety of approaches - structuralist, post-structuralist, feminist, Marxist, semiotic, psychoanalytical, philosophical, religious, and comparative - and we did reach consensus that any critical method which illuminates the work of Hitchcock must be considered valid. Perhaps the most interesting product of the final session, however, was a survey of plenary speakers (including David Sterritt, film critic for 'The Christian Science Monitor' and author of 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock') as to their favourite Hitchcock film. Overwhelmingly, *Vertigo* was named (Jane Sloan alone dissenting for *Under Capricorn*), and its pre-eminence in the Hitchcock canon seems sure, at least for the foreseeable future.

Publications from the Conference will be appearing over the next two years in the 'Hitchcock Annual' and elsewhere, video clips and 'sound bites' will be posted on the Conference Web site, and we also plan to collect essays for eventual book publication. The Web site may be visited at

http://diogenes.baylor.edu/WWWproviders/Greg_Garrett/alfred_hitchcock/hitchconf.html

and it will be continually updated with news and views related to the Conference and to Hitchcock.

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(Editor's note. Greg Garrett is the author of articles on film and popular culture in 'Literature/Film Quarterly', 'Journal of Popular Film and Television', 'Journal of Popular Culture', and many other journals, and has carried out extensive archival research on the working relationship between Ernest Lehman and Alfred Hitchcock. His first novel, 'Cycling', will be published in 1997 by Orchard Books. I'm grateful to Dr Garrett for contributing to 'The MacGuffin' the above overview of the Hitchcock Conference.)

More on *The Mountain Eagle* (1926)

In 'MacGuffin' 16, we printed Jenny Hammerton's report on her attempt to track down the lost Hitchcock film, *The Mountain Eagle*. The film - in name, at least - had figured prominently in the 1993 BFI publication, '"Missing, Believed Lost": The Great British Film Search' by Allen Eyles and David Meeker.

Meanwhile, as reported in 'MacGuffins' 17 and 18, some assiduous work by J. Lary Kuhns in California has lately thrown new light on the situation. The bad news is that no print of the film has turned up. Nor, apparently, does a copy of the film's scenario exist - it seems that when Truffaut interviewed Hitchcock in 1962 about the film, he was basing his questions on a synopsis, not on the script (the English translation of Truffaut's book is misleading about this).

The good news is that Kuhns has found many more stills from the film than were previously thought to exist. The bulk of them were located by him at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Though it isn't exactly clear how the

Academy came by the stills, Kuhns hopes to see them published soon. He presented a paper about his 'find' at the recent Hitchcock Conference in Austin, Texas, and may publish the paper in a forthcoming issue of the 'Hitchcock Annual'.

Also thanks to Kuhns, a slightly longer synopsis of the film than the one by Peter Noble we printed in 'MacGuffin' 16, has been found. It comes from 'The Bioscope', October 7, 1926, and I'll comment on it below. Here's the synopsis:

> *The Story:* ***Beatrice Brent****, school teacher in a small mountain village, incurs the enmity of* ***Pettigrew****, the local Justice of the Peace and owner of the village stores, because he believes that she encourages the attentions of his son* ***Edward****, a cripple, who takes evening lessons. Pettigrew, while questioning Beatrice, is himself influenced by her charm and attempts liberties which she strongly resents. He is so furious at the rebuff that he proclaims her as a wanton and she is driven from the village by the inhabitants. Beatrice is saved from their fury by a mysterious stranger known as* ***Fearogod****, who lives a solitary life in a cabin to which he takes her for shelter. To stop all scandal, Fearogod takes Beatrice down to the village and compels Pettigrew to marry them, explaining to her that he will help her to get a divorce. Beatrice, however, is content to leave the situation as it is, but Pettigrew, furious with rage, takes advantage of the fact that his son has left the village and arrests Fearogod for his murder. In spite of the fact that there is no vestige of evidence that young Pettigrew has been murdered, Fearogod is kept in prison for over a year, when he decides to escape. He finds that his wife has a baby and he goes off with them to the mountains. When they find that the baby is taken ill, Fearogod goes back to the village for a doctor, where he sees old Pettigrew. Some doubt as to which of the men is going to attack the other first is settled by an onlooker firing off a gun which wounds Pettigrew in the shoulder. The sudden return of his son Edward convinces the old man of the futility of proceeding with his accusation of murder, so he makes the best of matters by shaking hands with the man he has persecuted and all is supposed to end happily.*

The setting for all these events is Kentucky, though parts of the film were shot in the Austrian Tyrol. In John Russell Taylor's 'Hitch' (1978), which is the 'authorised' Hitchcock biography, Taylor quotes the film's producer, Michael Balcon, as saying pragmatically: why shouldn't the Tyrol stand in for Kentucky - who had ever been to Kentucky anyway ... ? (p. 68). Thus the story fits a category of tales about American mountain feuds, such as Harold Bell Wright's popular and sentimental 'The Shepherd of the Hills' (1907), set in the Ozarks, which had been filmed in 1919 (and would be again, in 1928, 1941, and 1963).

But especially important for Hitchcock scholarship are the pre-echoes of moments in the director's films to come. Whether or not Hitch thought of *The Mountain Eagle* at all when he was filming his other 'backwoods' tale, the comedy *The Trouble With Harry* (1956), or even such 'backwater' melodramas as *The Manxman* (1929) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) - in both of which two men vie for possession of the same woman - certainly the ending of *The Mountain Eagle* looks proleptic. That is, it does when you recall the similar ending Hitchcock planned for *Topaz* (1969). There too a pair of long-standing and well-matched rivals square off for a showdown, only to have matters taken out of their hands when a third party fires a shot from a distant grandstand, killing one of them. (See 'MacGuffin' 11, p. 3, and a still from the *Topaz* sequence in Neil Sinyard, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock', 1986, p. 136.) Also, the scene in *The Mountain Eagle* may seem to anticipate key moments from elsewhere in the Hitchcock canon: the ambiguous death of Verloc at his wife's hands in *Sabotage* (1936), and the symbolic wounding of Rupert Cadell at the climax of *Rope* (1948). As for the final, 'nominal' handshake, it may again recall *Under Capricorn* (the scene on the wharf).

In turn, these things suggest how Fearogod is himself not exactly a saint. Perhaps it's his recognition of that fact that makes him a recluse in the first place (cf the blind, but astute, Philip Martin, the hermit in *Saboteur*, 1942). Certainly he's happy to take Beatrice into his cabin and father a child by her. On the other hand, in his persecution both by Pettigrew and by the local 'mob', we may sense the torments of aspiring Christ-figures in other Hitchcock films, from *The Lodger* (1926) to *I Confess* (1953).

The abstract of J. Lary Kuhns's paper on *The Mountain Eagle* ends on an optimistic note. He writes: 'when we recall that a rare tinted print of *The Pleasure Garden* [1925] was found in Waco, Texas, as recently as 1992, it is perhaps not unreasonable to hope that *The Mountain Eagle* will also be found. Both films were after all brought to the US at the same time by the American distributor.'

K.M.M.

Footnote. 'The MacGuffin' thanks J. Lary Kuhns for providing us with the abstract of his paper from the recent Hitchcock Conference. As we go to press, he has further permitted us to print the following:

We can add to our present knowledge of the plot [of The Mountain Eagle*] two other scenes that Hitchcock himself describes to us. These are found in Hitchcock's memoir about Nita Naldi [who played Beatrice - the memoir, called "Life Among the Stars", is reprinted in Sidney Gottlieb, ed., 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', 1995, and the details recounted here are on p. 37]. In the first scene, Naldi is cleaning Malcolm Keen's [i.e. Fearogod's] rifle when a face appears at the window and she points the gun [at the interloper]. In the second scene, Naldi has been run out of town, and she turns on the villagers (Hitchcock calls them 'Kentucky farmers') and tells them off according to Hitchcock's direction, which was to 'give them all you've got'.*

In the 'Bioscope' review [which accompanied the above-quoted synopsis], there are some characterisations, such as that which describes Pettigrew as the worst-hated man in the district, who imposes his will on the people, and that which describes Fearogod as the most popular man in the district.

Finally, we are told in the 'Bioscope' review that the film has both summer and winter mountain scenery and picturesque timber interiors. As to mountain scenery, Hitchcock himself describes an extreme long-shot of a man in the snow [Gottlieb, p. 189]: 'Once I was shooting a scene in the Tyrol. There was a tiny figure trudging through the snow. Well, the fellow was so far away that no one could run and tell him when to stop, as their footprints would show in the snow.'

OZ-REPORT

Australian film community apprehensive about policy change

With the election of a Liberal (conservative) government in March this year, the Australian film community is feeling somewhat wary about what changes to expect in arts policy, particularly in the area that affects film, media and communications. The 13 years of federal Labour (socialist) government saw the development of a supportive and viable creative environment for a whole range of film practices. Will incoming Prime Minister, John Howard, be vindictive to an arts sector which made it quite clear it didn't want him? And will a pragmatic, cost-cutting Howard government make drastic changes to what is seen by most in the film community to be a film infrastructure that is working pretty well?

With a population of 17 million, Australia could not support a local film production industry without backing of various kinds by the federal government in particular. The past 13 years saw many such government iniatives: the abolition of the tax-based support system for film production that had led to many bad films and much abuse, and the establishment instead of the Film Finance Corporation; prioritising of the role of the National Film and Sound Archive and greatly increased funding (still not enough, however!); increased and more clearly defined levels of local content requirement for television, now including pay television; and Creative Nation, a visionary cultural policy statement.

Previous changes of government, both federal and state, led to quite drastic changes in both film policy and the actual film organisations and structures, not always to positive long-term effects. With the current support mechanisms producing probably the most effective range of film activities yet seen, most in the film community are hoping the changes this time round won't be too severe.

Fox Studio debate still raging

Australian newspaper owner and media boss Rupert Murdoch, who has a 50% stake in Fox Pictures, must be wondering just what he's done that the land of his birth is treating him so badly. Not only have his plans for a global Super League (rugby league football) competition on his world-encircling Pay TV channels been dealt a severe blow, with the Australian courts ruling that Super League can't start here until the year 2000, but his bold plans to open a Fox Studios in Sydney are still encountering much opposition. Debate has been heated about whether the studios will benefit either the local production industry or the city's environment and well-being, with local residents particularly upset that the proposed site for the studios at the Sydney Showgrounds has been handed to Murdoch with much secrecy in the political process and small prospect of the site now reverting to needed inner city parkland. Though the contract is expected to be formally signed soon, allowing Fox to move in at mid-year and to commence business in 1997, there are still enough irate local residents and determined politicians voicing opposition to ensure that it isn't yet a 'done deal'.

A serious concern that has been lost amidst all the discussion has just been addressed by the industry groups representing actors, directors, writers and technicians. They have formally recommended to the state government that Fox agree to make

a contractual commitment to a specified percentage of local production in the studios, and to invest in a guaranteed number of local projects. Actually, Fox have already invested in their first Australian film, albeit an Australian/UK co-production. *Oscar and Lucinda*, from the prize-winning novel by Peter Carey, with the script written by Laura Jones, will be directed by Gillian Armstrong. Production is due to start in July, with a nine-week shoot in Australia and three weeks in London, Devon, and either Oxford or Cambridge. Although most of the cast is Australian, the lead roles are to be played by Ralph Fiennes and an as yet unnamed English actress. The film's production designer, also not yet named, will face one enormous challenge: the construction of an enormous glass church, the objective of the quest at the heart of the story.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Janet Leigh, with Christopher Nickens: '*Psycho*: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Thriller' (Harmony Books: New York, 1995; 198pp)

Reviewed by Charles L.P. Silet

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* has become such an important cultural icon over the past 35 years that frequently it is difficult to see clearly the film through the social clutter. Bates Motel stationery and gag diplomas from the Bates School of Motel Management are for sale in gift shops, *Psycho* wearing paraphernalia is available in movie stores, and the movie - especially the shower scene - has been parodied on TV and in films, most famously by Mel Brooks in his wonderfully funny *High Anxiety* (1977) which spoofs a number of Hitchcock films. The American television soap opera, 'Guiding Light', slyly referred to the film in a recent episode when a male character masquerading as a woman used the name of 'Marion Crane' and when he reassumed his role as a male used the alias 'A. Perkins'.

What is interesting about these references is the assumption that a large segment of the American public have at least a passing familiarity with the names and events associated with the movie. Even those who have never actually seen the film know generally about it, particularly the scene in the shower. Also, if you ask women over a certain age about their experiences seeing the film for the first time when it was initially released, many of them can still vividly recall the place and circumstances and a few still harbour some anxieties about showering even after all these years. *Psycho* retains yet a certain macabre fascination. As Janet Leigh explains in her recent book, written with Christopher Nickens, it is certainly a subject which has dogged her life and career ever since she first appeared as Marion Crane, the movie's ill-starred heroine.

For a variety of reasons actors often become so closely associated with an individual role that in some cases it can control the rest of their lives, affecting the roles they are offered and shaping the viewing public's acceptance of the characters they create on the screen. Janet Leigh and Anthony Perkins experienced such a relationship with the roles they played in Hitchcock's classic film, but they each handled the ordeal in very different ways.

For Perkins the experience became something of a nightmare. Although appearing in the film gave him international prominence, his career, and some say his life, was largely destroyed because he became so closely tied professionally to the character of Norman Bates, the psychotic motel manager. He repeatedly tried to escape the persona of Norman, initially by moving to Europe during the early 60s and appearing in films there, where for a time he had a successful career and often worked with top-rate directors like Anatole Litvak in *Goodbye Again/Aimez-vous Brahms?* (1961), Jules Dassin in *Phaedra* (1962), and Orson Welles in *The Trial* (1962). During this period many of his parts were substantial and challenging; however, when he tried to revive his career in the States, he remained haunted by the ghost of Norman Bates and spent the last few years of his life replaying him in a number of *Psycho* remakes during the 80s. Despite the fact that Perkins had a distinguished career both on the stage and in films, when he died, at an all too early age, in 1992, it was largely for his part in *Psycho* that he was eulogised.

Janet Leigh had a very different experience. Although her performance as Marion Crane will probably remain as her most famous, she was able to get beyond it and managed to fashion a successful career which continues today. However, there are ghosts from *Psycho* in her past as well, and one suspects that writing this book was done, in part at least, to lay to rest her experiences connected with the film. In her 1984 autobiography, 'There Really Was a Hollywood', she devotes a chapter to the making of *Psycho* and her working relationship with Hitchcock, but most of the book is spent tracing the rest of her active life and career, both in and out of the film world.

In the opening note to her new book Ms Leigh remarks that after her autobiography she never intended to write again about *Psycho*, but that the film's high status, and the way it has continued to attract attention, forced itself upon her. In spite of the fact that she has largely ceased to appear in films, her fan mail continues unabated and often the correspondents list *Psycho* as their favourite of her films. Furthermore, she has been repeatedly interviewed about her experiences on the set, and her personal appearances invariably attract fans who want to know more about the movie. For example, when she opened the Hitchcock Pavilion at the Universal Theme Park in Orlando, Florida, she signed photos for hours as people filed out of the Hitchcock exhibit. Then over a literary lunch in New York after the Orlando opening, the group at her table discussed the film's longevity, its effect on the viewing public, and the persistent impact that it has had on the film's participants and their families. Although initially she questioned if she had anything else to add, as she did more research and discovered the complexity, richness, and influence of *Psycho*, she realised that indeed there was more she wanted to write.

Ms Leigh had another compelling reason for doing this book. She wanted to correct some of the mistakes which were circulating in materials written by others who had not participated in the filming itself. The need to set the record straight also explains why she took on Christopher Nickens as a collaborator: he would write the chapters to flesh out the background of the film, and she would supply inside information about the actual experience of making it.

Probably no film in the history of Hollywood has been as fully documented as has *Psycho*. From both an academic and a personal perspective dozens of essays, interviews, and books have appeared on it. Richard Anobile's 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*' (1974) contains frame-stills from each of the scenes in the movie along with the movie's dialogue; James Naremore's 'Filmguide to *Psycho*' (1973) provides a plot-synopsis, credits, and a detailed analysis of the film's narrative; and Stephen Rebello's 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of *Psycho*' (1990) exhaustively traces the origins of the film's script, discusses the history of the production, and follows the actual shooting of the movie.

In addition, over the years dozens of essays and sections in books have appeared, and like William Rothman's chapter on the film in his 'Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze' (1982) which runs to almost 100 pages, some of them are quite substantial. Many of the principals who worked on the film have been interviewed at length, including not only Ms Leigh and Mr Perkins but also novelist Robert Bloch, who wrote the original story, screenwriter Joseph Stefano, Saul Bass, who designed the titles and the famous shower scene, as well as Bernard Herrmann, the composer of the eerie music that contributed greatly to the overall success of the film. Each of these people has thus at one time or another added to the *Psycho* mythology. Even many of the technical crew were consulted for many of the essays written about the film. Hitchcock himself talked about the movie in the celebrated interviews conducted by the French *auteur*, François Truffaut, which were published in an English edition as 'Hitchcock' (revised edition, 1984). Indeed, so much has already appeared about *Psycho* that it really does make one wonder what more anyone could say about it.

* * *

Janet Leigh began her film career when she was discovered by Norma Shearer, actress and widow of the former Hollywood whiz-kid Irving Thalberg, and signed to a contract with MGM in 1947. After her debut in *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* (1947), she appeared in dozens of studio projects in the late 1940s like *Little Women*, *The Forsyte Saga*, and *Holiday Affair*. In the early 50s she starred in the Anthony Mann western, *The Naked Spur* with James Stewart. She was also paired up with her then-husband, Tony Curtis, in *Houdini*, *Prince Valiant*, and *The Black Shield of Falworth*. But by the mid-50s she reduced her film appearances and began acting in projects which broadened her image and which were directed by some of Hollywood's most celebrated filmmakers such as Josef von Sternberg and Orson Welles, in whose *Touch of Evil* she played a woman menaced in a lonely motel room, a role which she reprised in *Psycho*. By the time she was cast as Marion Crane, Ms Leigh had learned her craft in traditional Hollywood fashion, appearing in film after film and working her way up through the studio ranks. In the process she had become a thoroughly professional actress. It was this experience which helped her to create her performance in Hitchcock's movie and which gave her the skills to cope with the added fame that film heaped upon her.

By her own admission, Ms Leigh approached the shooting of *Psycho* in much the same way she had her previous three dozen movies. She was excited, of course, to be working with Hitchcock, whose reputation by the end of the 1950s was at its all-time high, but she did not assume that the experience would be anything more than just another acting job, albeit with a famous director. Much of her recollection of making the picture reflects her matter-of-fact approach to filmmaking and her professionalism.

'*Psycho*: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Thriller' contains much more observation about the film and its director than does her autobiography, and her new book supplies new material about the shooting of various scenes, particularly the shower scene. In addition, she interviewed several of the other principals. Of particular interest to serious students of the movie,

Ms Leigh shares her thoughts on her creation of the character of Marion, and discusses her working relationship with Hitchcock, often explaining how she developed some detail of her performance in collaboration with him. She also furnishes anecdotal recollections of her work with other cast members. For instance, she recounts how in the opening bedroom scene in the Phoenix hotel room she and Hitchcock coaxed a more passionate reaction from her co-star John Gavin, who played Sam Loomis, her boyfriend in the film. Such insider material is valuable. One could have wished that she had supplied even more of these reminiscences.

Ms Leigh also offers real insight into the post-production events of the film, especially the publicity surrounding its release which helps to explain how the film came to have such an immediate impact on its initial audiences. Unlike other similar show-business stories, hers avoid hindsight observations intimating that those involved in the film knew from the beginning that it would become an instant classic and celebrated in cinema history. Still, she does mention that the release of *Psycho* was unlike any other in her experience.

Some of the film's early reviews were quite negative and attacked Hitchcock's reputation by condemning the movie for its violence and shock-value. However, audience reactions were positive and the box-office was strong, which eventually led some of the reviewers to reconsider their first reactions to the film and prompted the studio executives, who had from the first been sceptical about the project and even withheld financial support, to revise their scepticism as well. Initially, studio support had been so unenthusiastic that Hitchcock had been forced for the first time in his life to make the film with his own money. But, predictably, once *Psycho* proved to be successful, the studio executives were more than happy to cash in on its growing financial returns and were willing to supply additional funds to help with the film's publicity and distribution.

After 35 years some of the memories surrounding the film have become hazy, and it would have not been surprising if Ms Leigh had provided a revisionist account of its making and sought to condemn those who were reluctant to see immediately its importance. But she does not do so. While realising in retrospect that she was privy to the making of one of the most important and famous movies of our time, Ms Leigh carefully recounts the events as she remembers them. So much about *Psycho* has been distorted by the movie's mythology, it is refreshing to read an account as balanced as the one related here.

* * *

In spite of the fact that '*Psycho*: Behind the Scenes of the Classic Thriller' provides an enjoyable read and is frequently insightful, the book does have its weaknesses, which are mostly acts of omission. Although one of the main reasons Ms Leigh had for writing the book in the first place was to correct the errors in the accounts of the film written by others, eventually there is little of that in the final account. She does try to set the record straight about the role Saul Bass played in designing and allegedly shooting the shower scene, by explaining that to her - and some others' - recollection he had little to do with its actual filming, and she tidies up several small errors about other aspects of the scene. Was she ever totally nude in it, how much of the final footage actually is of her and not her body-double, and did appearing in it traumatise her about showers? Her interviews with other members of the crew are informative but after so long a period of time and in view of the fact that so many of these people were interviewed by others writing about *Psycho*, their recollections may be of varying reliability.

The sections written by Mr Nickens are informative and do provide some background for Ms Leigh's text but most of what he says is widely available from other sources, especially in Stephen Rebello's book which is so comprehensive that almost everything else available about the making of the film palls by comparison. However, the reasons for reading Ms Leigh's book reside less with the new information which she provides and more with the charm she brings to it. Finally, the book is simply great fun to read, which is obviously why she wrote it in the first place.

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Cohen, Paula Marantz: 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' (The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1995; 198pp, pb).

Reviewed by Leonard J. Leff

In 'Alfred Hitchcock and the British Cinema' (1986), Tom Ryall calls the director a hybrid, 'a marooned figure, too businesslike and commercial to be an "artist," yet too "artistic" to be fitted comfortably into the British entertainment cinema of the time' (Ryall, p. 183). Like Ryall, like others, Paula Marantz Cohen has sensed the anomalies in the director and his work. Unlike others, she has found an unusual way to explain them.

Cohen links the subjectivity of the Victorian novel to that of the cinema - inevitably a clash, since we associate literature with the female point of view, movies with its suppression. She then shows how the director of such utterly contemporary pictures as *Psycho* and *Notorious* was in fact locked in the 19th century and caught between two strains of Victorianism: 'the feminine legacy of feeling and imagination associated with the domestic novel and the masculine legacy of law and hierarchy - the world of the schoolyard - associated with dominant institutions and values' (3).

Cohen, who engages in close analysis of a dozen or so films, not only visits such familiar sites as *Psycho* and *Sabotage* but goes off trail to explore *Spellbound*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and (the richest section of the book, its turning point and the key that unlocks much of *Vertigo*) *The Wrong Man*. Her readable and intelligent study relies on no one critical or theoretical methodology; instead, she uses feminism, psychoanalysis, and especially family systems to prove (among other things) how the father-daughter relationship functions in Hitchcock as a romantic ideal. Mainly, she succeeds: 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' offers a new and bracing approach to an old problem.

Now, one caveat. 'Hitchcock's family of origin laid the foundation for his identity,' Cohen says in the introduction. 'Yet, in the context of his career, of more interest than that childhood family was the family he "made": his wife, Alma (née Reville), and his daughter, Patricia' (6). Cohen calls the family 'an evolving system,' and while her comments on the family in general have staying power, her analysis of the Hitchcock ménage per se appears forced. Bruno's murder of one woman and 'assault' by another in *Strangers on a Train*, Cohen states, 'can be said to trace the story of Hitchcock's own journey with respect to his daughter as an autonomous figure tied to him in essential ways' (84). Likewise, the role of the secretary in *Psycho* (Cohen infers) was 'conceived as revenge against Pat for marrying' (75). Since Cohen has little access to the director called 'Hitchcock,' via personal letters or even memoranda he wrote, she must base her assertions chiefly on the films, which, ultimately, are ill constructed to bear the weight of such speculation.

Still, 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on the director. It not only positions Hitchcock in an unusual way but adds to the cultural history of film.

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(Editor's note. Professor Leff's review was originally published on the World Wide Web. 'The MacGuffin', a non-profit educational publication authorised by Australian Mensa, thanks the author and the original publishers for allowing us to reprint the review here. We'll review Paula Marantz Cohen's book at length in our next issue.)

Dennis Barker interviews Alfred Hitchcock on the set of *Frenzy* in 1971

THERE IS a large area of calm at Pinewood Studios, and at its centre sits Mr Alfred Hitchcock. All heredity, he says: he was lucky enough to have a very placid mother.

He is directing his first picture in Britain for 21 years, a 72-year-old ruddy-cheeked cherub, hands clasped in his director's chair, telling people in that caressing growl to please take their time, gently informing Miss Vivien Merchant that it doesn't matter if her shoulder strap is showing because women's shoulder straps *do* show, pleading that an offending noisy sparrow in the studio rafters should not be shot 'in cold bird's blood'.

The film he is working on is called *Frenzy*. It is about a multiple sex-murderer who strangles a woman with a necktie and then has the body dumped in the Thames under the nose of a Cabinet minister pontificating about the success of a Thames anti-pollution scheme. The counterpoint between personal mode and professional intention is exquisite and essentially Hitchcockian. Mr Hitchcock, in short, is definitely back home again.

There are obtuse people - even today when some intellectuals are, he says, finding half the things in his work that are there and half of them that aren't - who claim he has never left his characteristic artistic home. Mr Hitchcock replies that he is no more typed than novelists are typed. That if he tried to make a musical 'they would be waiting to see which chorus girl got shot first'.

That costume films don't appeal to him because of the lack of realistic detail - 'people in them never go to the lavatory'. That if he made a Western he would dress all the men in bowlers and waxed moustaches, because that is what they actually wore.

Meticulous genius, impish irony

Mr Hitchcock then goes back to doing what he has been doing uniquely for nearly 50 years: creating suspense with a meticulous genius, an impish irony that never quite reveals the darkest of its dark sides, though always hinting that it may do so.

At Pinewood he works from a private caravan on the set. He rests there a lot to ease a back injury after falling against a glass table at Claridges, where he invariably stays while in London. The inside of the caravan is Spartan. A table with one coffee cup (instant coffee). A plain desk bearing two books on Corot and Vermeer (he quotes painters often in making points about visual composition). About 100 sheets of paper on which he can draw the exact positions of actors and furniture in all his shots.

He interviews as he films: with slow deliberation, with formal courtesy, with single-minded concentration, and in his own way. What causes him to make the films he does? Humour, and a 'Jekyll and Hyde thing, with the Hyde side minimal'. Stupidity on the set, from people who should know better, he claims to be about the only thing that will awaken the Mr Hyde. But it was perfectly true what Ingrid Bergman said about him: it was impossible to have a fight with him, he would just disappear. 'I have no temperament. At least, not for clashing. I prefer to enjoy what I do.'

Questions are urbanely answered in the breaks from shooting. Can we first talk about *Frenzy*? Mr Hitchcock folds his hands on the caravan desk, and speaks with a deliberation rapidly overtaken by an almost schoolboyish delight.

'I suppose one of the distinctive sequences in this picture will be a man who has murdered the girl, hidden her in a potato sack and then has the misfortune to have to chase after it because he realises that the victim has a piece of incriminating evidence in her hand. So you find a man struggling with a body where rigor mortis has set in, inside a lorry full of sacks of potatoes and moving along the M1 at night. It is a kind of black comedy. It is rather more than another hazard on the M1.'

He protests that he has no interest in horror for the sake of horror. In his films it's merely 'impressionist' horror: 'like the murder of the girl in the shower in *Psycho*'.

'The property department made up the most perfect torso in pink sponge and it was tubed inside and tanked with blood. The point was that whenever you plunged a knife into it, blood would gush out. But they anticipated me, because I said I didn't need it. I never used it at all. I wasn't going to treat the scene in that manner. That, to me, is the obvious violence. I showed someone stabbing, then I merely showed the reaction to it. You never saw the knife cut the body in the whole scene. Not only that, I made the film in black and white so you wouldn't see blood flowing in the bath tub.

'Showing these things is merely unnecessary because the impression has just as strong an effect on the audience. It was done cinematically. It wasn't done by - what shall we say? - straight photography like you see in these war films with lots of blood flowing over men's bodies and all that. It is unimaginative to me. It is too easy.'

In the past, Mr Hitchcock has alternated between experimenting (costume drama in *Under Capricorn*, filming almost on a pin's head in *Lifeboat*, the ten-minute take in *Rope*, the enormously complex technical tricks of *The Birds*) and recharging his batteries by playing safe (*Dial M For Murder* and the like).

'That is very true. To shoot a film like *Dial M for Murder* one could almost say: "This one is so easy, I could phone that one in, I don't really have to go to the studio to do that."'

Delayed critical reaction

Does he these days lead a generally easy life, back in California? 'Home and studio, that's it.' And reading? 'I get up always about 7 am, go to bed at 9. Always go to bed at 9, even here.' Doesn't this damage his social life? 'Don't have any.' Surely he must have some, at least when he isn't shooting? 'No, not at all. Don't care much about it. Everyone comes in and has drinks, and then they go away and say what a lousy party. Some people love parties. I don't see much in 'em. As far as I am concerned, you get buttonholed by one individual in the corner of the room and you can't get away, that is my experience of parties. I'd rather be at home, reading a book.'

Critics? He doesn't resent them. In general, he finds some critics don't see what he is getting at immediately. 'I think the most strange thing is that there is a tremendously delayed critical reaction with my films. That is the one thing I don't understand: why they don't see it the first time. It takes a year and they look at it again and they apparently see a different

film. It has been noticed on many occasions that the film is dismissed at first showing and then a year later it is a classic. *Psycho* is an example. And *To Catch a Thief*. I don't remember *Rebecca* was acclaimed in the beginning, though it did win the Academy Award for the best picture of the year.'

Face to face with journalists, Mr Hitchcock is as deft as any politician at saying what he wants to say whatever the question, and doing it with tremendous civility.

He dislikes being manoeuvred into a moral position: he will denounce blood sports and then in the next breath admit to 'frustration' because deer that ruin his grape orchard can be shot during only one month of the year. He is morally neutral. Shakespeare as opposed to Shaw, Trollope as opposed to Dickens. He says quite passionately that 'hating people is ridiculous', and immediately adds: 'Unprofitable.'

Is he conscious that he grabs avidly at every question about technique, and looks unhappy, almost startled, when required to give any sort of moral judgment on something that 12 good-men-and-true might possibly regard as a moral judgment? Uneasily, he says he is not qualified to give moral judgments, any more than a lot of people who do give them are, and he quotes Sam Goldwyn: 'Messages are for Western Union.'

But as the day's shooting draws to a close he admits to supposing all his films have a moral judgment - they show the triumph of good over evil. Mr Hitchcock believes in good and evil. It is perhaps a temporarily unfashionable idea: but a Jesuitical education dies hard, even in Hollywood. Even in the two-tone Rolls-Royce which sweeps out of Pinewood about 60 seconds after the day's final shot. Mr Hitchcock has finished all his effective business for the day. Mr Hitchcock has evaporated.

BLOOPERS

The director of *La Naissance de l'amour/The Birth of Love* - which was nominated by Adrian Martin in 'MacGuffin' 18 as the best film he saw in 1995 - is of course Philippe Garrel. The film was made in 1993.

We also managed to omit last time an addendum by Tina Kaufman to her 'best of 1995' list, in which she named her two 'most underrated' films of the year: '*The Colour of Night* (d. Richard Rush), a compelling and wonderfully overwrought melodrama; and the beauty and delicacy of performance by both Marlon Brando and Johnny Depp in *Don Juan de Marco* (d. Jeremy Leven).'

And Evan Williams has written to say that he 'unaccountably omitted' from *his* 'best of 1995' list Emir Kusturica's *Underground*, which he would place second, after André Téchiné's *Les Roseaux Sauvages/Wild Reeds*. Note that this makes Kusturica's film another to be nominated as 'best' by three out of four of our critics. (The other thrice-nominated films were *Les Roseaux Sauvages*, Boaz Yakim's *Fresh*, Nano Moretti's *Caro Diario/Dear Diary*, and Tim Burton's *Ed Wood*. No film was nominated by all four critics.)

* * *

Next, some fairly straightforward (I think) errors. In the article last time on *The Manxman*, the footnote 28 on page 23 gave an incorrect page number of Steven C. Smith's book, 'A Heart at Fire's Centre'. Bernard Herrmann's scornful remark about Hitchcock's taste in film-scoring may be found on page 362 of Smith's book.

In 'MacGuffin' 16, at the top of page 7, we wrongly said that the Margaret Herrick Library is part of the American Film Institute. It is of course part of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Also in 'MacGuffin' 16, my article on *Foreign Correspondent* consistently misspelt the name of star Joel McCrea. (According to J. Lary Kuhns, who has an eagle-eye for these things, a recent issue of 'Films In Review' consistently made the same error!)

In 'MacGuffin' 15, in my article on *Spellbound*, I made several references (notably on pp. 17-18) to how the film implies our separation from knowledge of the absolute, the noumenal (which the philosopher Schopenhauer equates with 'Will'). However, on page 20, I proceeded to introduce without explanation the term 'the numinous' - which was careless of me. True, the two things - the noumenal and the numinous - *are* related in the context I was writing about. After all, on page 17, I said: 'I fancy that the poets [e.g. Vaughan and Wordsworth] who wrote of our separation from "God" were really

describing what Kant and Schopenhauer, roughly their contemporaries, identified more rigorously as our separation from the "noumenal".' But I should still have acknowledged the customary distinction in meaning between the two words. Here it is. According to the dictionary: *noumenal* means 'pertaining to the noumenon, an unknown and unknowable substance or thing as it is in itself'. And *numinous* means 'pertaining to a divinity; suffused with feeling of a divinity'.

In 'MacGuffin' 13, on page 4, Tom Ryan referred to Joe Queenan's newly-published book, 'If You're Talking To Me Your Career Must Be In Trouble', in which Queenan claims that at the end of *Vertigo*, Scottie's anguished outburst against Judy/Madeleine is Hitchcock's displaced anger at Grace Kelly's desertion of him for Prince Rainier. Tom Ryan's comment on this ('definitely not scholarship') seems borne out by the interview with Hitchcock printed in Charles Thomas Samuels, 'Encountering Directors' (1972). There, on page 245, Samuels asks Hitchcock whether *Vertigo* does in fact refer to Hitchcock himself ('You change Kim Novak into Grace Kelly, just as Jimmy Stewart changes her from one girl to another'). Hitchcock's reply: 'No, there's nothing in that.' So the blooper in this case looks definitely to be Queenan's, and he in turn looks to some of us, I must say, a rather unpleasant piece of work ...

* * *

Finally, two points about my article on *Torn Curtain* in 'MacGuffin' 8. On page 15, after saying that 'movies are [virtually] all Representation and little or no Will', I contrived to write this near-gibberish: 'And Gromek, like Manny [in *The Wrong Man*], neglects to leaven the former with a touch of the latter. (Intuition? Insight? Compassion?)' I'd had in mind my reference on the previous page to Dr Oliver Sacks ('Awakenings') and how Sacks 'was paraphrasing Schopenhauer when he said that to speak in terms of either concept [i.e. Representation or Will] alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of building a meaningful world'. I'd added that this idea of Sacks 'amounts to an exhortation to be both subjective and objective at the same time' - which for most of us is well-nigh impossible. So *that* capacity is what Gromek lacks, as opposed, perhaps, to an artist like Hitchcock. Gromek is literally a pushy fellow, but he's without real power or insight. Whereas, Hitchcock was in a position to embrace a large, if fairly pessimistic, vision, and convey to us such things as a need for compassion as part of that vision. My 12-page analysis of *Torn Curtain* tried to show all of this. Actually, I think it's one of my better analyses (no matter that the film itself isn't fully successful artistically)!

In that same article, I noted how the film often seems to make reference to things of Greek origin (e.g. certain mathematical symbols, philosophical ideas, forms of architecture). I now think that the very titles-sequence may take its inspiration from a 'Grecian' motif. Here's how I originally described the sequence (p. 12):

> Torn Curtain *begins as follows. The screen swirls with grey mist. Electronic rumblings are heard. Out of the mist emerges a spurt of flame. The screen [in effect] divides, so that the flame burns sun-like on the left and, on the right, a succession of faces is seen through the mist. The main-titles music starts up - a lurching yet urgent theme of horns and xylophones. The flame and the faces fade. The grey mist still swirls. The view dissolves - and the music segues - to the start of the film proper. We see a grey ship proceeding through a grey and misty Norwegian fiord ...*

Part of my interpretation of this was that the film 'starts by showing the birth of a universe, then proceeds to represent what both Buddhism and Hinduism (and some early Greek faiths) call the "sorrowful weary wheel" of time'. (For a full explanation, see pages 12-13 of my article.)

I'd now exegete the titles-sequence by referring specifically to the Greek astronomer and philosopher Anaximander (c.611-c.547 BC), who is said to have made the first attempt to offer a detailed explanation of all aspects of nature. Cf, say, the reference in *The Birds* to archaeopteryx, probably the earliest known form of primitive bird, and the reference to the sequoias in *Vertigo*, where these are called (wrongly!) 'the oldest living things'. Anaximander believed that the universe originated from something boundless and indefinite, which had always existed, and which he called *apeiron*; and that this *apeiron*, by its constant motion, separated opposites out from itself (e.g. hot and cold, moist and dry). In turn, these opposites interact by encroaching on one another and thus repay one another's 'injustice'. The result is a plurality of worlds that successively decay and return to the indefinite - as *Torn Curtain* returns to greyness at its close. (In fact, my analysis of *Torn Curtain* showed that the film is built on just such a play, or conflict, of opposites as I've here described, so that the film overall exactly matches Anaximander's cosmology.)

Incidentally, Anaximander's notion of *apeiron* ('indefinite') and its processes prefigured the later conception of the indestructibility of matter. So it could also be said to have prefigured Schopenhauer's concepts of Will and Representation (which my analysis again showed to match the film closely).

Melody and Murder: Some Reflections on Music in Hitchcock's Films

ONE OF the first things to attract me to Hitchcock's films was their use of music. Years ago, long before I began writing regular film reviews in 'The Sydney Morning Herald' and 'The Australian', I conducted a small experiment. A friend had acquired an old 9.5mm print of *Blackmail*, which Hitchcock shot in a silent version in 1929, later adding a soundtrack. My friend and I decided to do the same: add a soundtrack of our own using a magnetic stripe bonded to the edge of the film. Magnetic striping - I remind younger 'MacGuffin' readers - was a common practice among home-movie buffs in the pre-video era, and excellent results could be achieved.

Our mix had the usual effects - traffic sounds, clinking crockery in the restaurant scene, appropriate screams - but we wanted something cold and evocative for the musical interludes. I suggested the Fourth Symphony of Sibelius, long stretches of which we dubbed over Alice's visit to Crewe's studio and the events leading up to the stabbing. It was a wildly pretentious and unsuitable choice, but something about the stark grandeur and desolation of the sound had struck a chord with me. Years later I read Philip Sametz's description of Sibelius's Fourth - 'that terrifying depiction of the concept of zero' - a reference to the high-register string passages in the first movement, which convey an unearthly loneliness. I was even more gratified to discover Donald Spoto's comment in 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Films' (1992), that Bernard Herrmann's famous music for *Psycho* - scored entirely for violins and cellos and aptly described by Herrmann himself as black-and-white music - was in the direct tradition of - guess what? - 'Sibelius's Fourth Symphony and much of Mahler'!

I was glad to think that I had anticipated Herrmann, or at any rate Spoto, by a few years, though the comparison with Mahler was difficult to accept. The extreme economy and concentration of Sibelius's music puts him in a different world from Mahler, perhaps the most long-winded of composers with the exception of Wagner or his disciple Anton Bruckner. One could imagine that Hitch, among the most crisp and economical of filmmakers, would have had little time for any of them (though I've heard that he and Mrs Hitchcock enjoyed Wagner). But Sibelius I think he would have loved.

Spoto's comparison with Mahler reminded me of the reference to Wagner's music in *Murder!*, which Hitch made a year after *Blackmail*, in 1930. Sound-recording techniques were by now more sophisticated, but still too primitive to allow the post-dubbing of Herbert Marshall's interior monologue over a pre-recorded musical background. Hitch's solution was to have an orchestra play the overture from 'Tristan and Isolde' on the set - and record the music while the cameras filmed Marshall shaving before a mirror, at the same time picking up a pre-recorded playback of his voice. It was one of Hitchcock's first experiments with the use of sound and the adaptation of music for his films. Curiously enough, there were further echoes of the Tristan and Isolde legend years later in *Vertigo* (1958). According to the legend, when Isolde forsakes Tristan to marry the King, the heartbroken Tristan marries another woman called Isolde to keep alive the memory of his former love, but eventually dies of a broken heart. A link between love and death is, of course, a theme of *Vertigo*; but unlike Tristan, Scottie does not die at the end, though we are left to speculate on whether he will leap from the bell-tower to follow Madeleine, whom he has twice seen die (as he believes) in the same fashion. According to Spoto, Herrmann's 'lush, symphonic score' more than once recalls the Liebestod from 'Tristan and Isolde'.

While agreeing with Spoto's high opinion of the score, I have reservations again about his musical judgement. I can see frankly no resemblance at all between the *Vertigo* score and 'Tristan and Isolde'. Herrmann's scores were the very opposite of 'lush and symphonic'. They had a driving, often jarring energy, and even when the strings predominated the effect was rarely 'lush' in the Max Steiner or Franz Waxman manner. This is true also of lesser Hitchcock composers. To take one example, the first full exposition of Lyn Murray's theme music in *To Catch a Thief* (1955) occurs when Cary Grant makes his getaway from the hotel at Monte Carlo in his car, pursued by the police. The music is a jaunty tune using piccolos and flutes. The best Hitchcock composers - Tiomkin and, of course, Herrmann - had a clear understanding of the playfulness of Hitch's films, even when the subject was darkest.

When my friend and I striped our track onto *Blackmail* years ago our equipment was even more rudimentary than that available to Hitch in the 1920s. There was no way we could superimpose Crewe's piano playing onto our Sibelius! Crewe describes his piano tune as 'a song about you, my dear' - it is a sinister line - and it is heard while Alice is undressing behind the screen. Later, before he attempts to rape Alice, Crewe plays the piano again. What struck me at the time was Hitch's fondness for musical 'events' and details, even in a film designed for the silent screen. And when we look back on his silent films we find in all of them - with the possible exception of *The Manxman* (1929) - some musical business or other. Hitch loved places and occasions where music was played - ballrooms, fairgrounds, weddings, churches, music halls, concert halls. In *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), the first film he directed, the title shot shows a jazz singer beside the credits, followed by a scene of a high-kicking chorus line in a music hall. It is as if the director were signalling one of his recurring preoccupations from the first moment of his career. Later in *The Pleasure Garden* a jazz band - consisting, it seems, of banjos and saxophones - plays while a couple dance. This being a silent film we are spared the sound of this bizarre

combination, but the absence of sound was no deterrent to Hitch's musical ambitions. In *The Lodger* (1926) the eponymous hero and his sister are seen dancing in flashback at a ball; there is more music and dancing in the three silent films Hitchcock directed in 1927 - *Downhill*, *Easy Virtue*, and *The Ring* (the latter featuring a pianist's fingers in distorted close-up). Dancing, musicians and glee-singers turn up again in *The Farmer's Wife* and *Champagne* (both made in 1928). After his second sound film, *Juno and the Paycock* (1929), in which Juno and Mary sing together, Hitch directed the linking sequences for the first British musical revue, *Elstree Calling* (1930). He was later to dismiss the latter enterprise as of no importance, and one can agree with him, but it shows that music was never far from the director's interests.

Evidently Hitchcock had no serious musical training (so that he once complained that he had to allow his composers more latitude than he would have liked), but it is striking how important music seems to be in his films. The selection of music and the cues for musical entries were matters Hitch took very seriously. These days the more ambitious Hollywood soundtracks tend to be mixed from rock ballads and pop music sources with less attention given to the big commissioned score; marketing soundtrack albums is part of every producer's business. Hitch lived in the days when the commissioned film composer flourished in Hollywood, and he treated his composers with considerable respect. There's a clue to his musical leanings in a remark he made to François Truffaut: 'At times I have the feeling I'm an orchestra conductor, a trumpet sound corresponding to a close-up and a distant-shot suggesting an entire orchestra performing a muted accompaniment.' Was Hitch, then, a composer *manqué*? The film scholar Royal S. Brown has identified in the film scores such things as a characteristic 'Hitchcock chord', the frequent use of persistent downward movements, short phrases for themes, and the elimination of melody. Certainly Hitch was about as precise in his musical directions as he was in all other aspects of production - editing, camerawork, production design - and in the meticulous preparation for each shot, which he plotted on storyboards before shooting began.

But the films reveal much more than a technical mastery of music as an accompaniment to the image. Of course, in this respect Hitchcock was scarcely superior to many other directors - Lang, Capra, Renoir, Ford - and perhaps inferior to a director like Kubrick. What distinguished Hitchcock was a fascination with musicians as characters, with music as a plot device, with musical scenes, references and set-pieces. Only one sound film was entirely without a musical score (*The Birds*) - though this fact alone was a kind of musical statement in itself - and one (*Lifeboat*) had music only for the opening and closing moments. Elizabeth Weis, in her book 'The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track' (1982), sees music in Hitchcock as an indicator of class, with characters who are amateur and professional musicians, and songs and lyrics used in many films to reveal guilt and innocence. Take two songs in consecutive films. In *The Birds* (1963), the children are heard chanting a nursery song as the birds gather outside the school; in *Marnie* (1964), the children outside Mrs Edgar's house at the end are heard chanting another song ('Mother, mother, I am ill,/ Send for the doctor over the hill ...'). In both cases the words convey innocence and vulnerability, and in the latter film actually signal Marnie's mental condition.

Before writing this piece I jotted down every example I could remember of a key musical scene or plot twist in a Hitchcock film: the song with its coded message in *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), the song that reunites Doris Day and her kidnapped son in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1955), the 'Merry Widow Waltz' that points at Uncle Charlie's crimes in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), the Cole Porter song ('The Laziest Gal in Town') that hints at Marlene Dietrich's base motives in *Stage Fright* (1950), even Lila's discovery of the old 78 rpm record of the Eroica Symphony in Mrs Bates's bedroom. It seems Hitch's use of music became more sparing and sophisticated as his work matured. Middle-period films like *Rebecca* (1940) overdid the music at times, and Miklos Rozsa's score for *Spellbound* (1945), although it won an Oscar (and, in Spoto's words, established the theremin as 'Hollywood's official instrument to suggest psychosis'), was overripe and intrusive. By the time he made *Notorious* (1946) Hitch was mature enough to break with Hollywood convention and avoid all music during Cary Grant's first passionate kiss with Ingrid Bergman, and again in the final scenes. Yet *Notorious* is especially rich in musical references. 'There's nothing like a love song to give you a good laugh,' says Bergman during her late-night drunken reverie; South American rhythms accompany our first glimpse of Rio; and Schumann is heard on a piano at Sebastian's party during the entrance of his mother (Leopoldine Konstantin). Evocative piano music occurs often in the films, suggesting not so much romantic attachment as a pang of yearning or nostalgia. The effect, of course, is contrasted with livelier rhythms in the suspense scenes; but ponderous and sombre music was rarely to Hitch's taste. At the climactic party scene in *Notorious* Ingrid Bergman asks for 'Brazilian music' as a cover to get to the cellar: 'They've been playing waltzes all evening.'

A comparatively minor work like *The Paradine Case* (1947) benefits greatly from the judicious use of music. Again we see music *played* in the film, not just heard in the background. The daughter of the Charles Coburn character picks out a tune on a piano at a dinner party given by the judge (Charles Laughton); the music here has a particular resonance because the daughter is the first character in the film to guess the truth and voice her suspicion about Mrs Paradine. Later we hear a piano when Gregory Peck inspects the country house where Mrs Paradine has lived with her lover; the music sheets are actually seen on the piano, and we are shown a close-up of them (just as we are allowed to examine the score before the famous cymbal-clash in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*). The piece itself is labelled 'Appassionata', opus 49 by 'Francesco

Ceruomo'. No musical reference I have consulted in my considerable library mentions a composer of that name, and the thought has occurred to me that this may have been a Hitchcock prank. Was Ceruomo a minor Hollywood composer (though even minor ones usually get a mention in Grove), or perhaps a pseudonym of Franz Waxman? Can any 'MacGuffin' reader enlighten me?[1] The sharp, disembodied sound of a woman's mocking laughter - presumably the housekeeper's, or perhaps an imagined or ghostly echo of Mrs Paradine herself - which we hear while Gregory Peck is examining the piano, tends to reinforce my suspicion that Hitch was pulling our leg.

Two other films tell us much about Hitch's attitude to music. In a way they are a mirror-image of each other. Both have musicians in key roles, and in both the police suspect the wrong man. In *The Wrong Man* (1957) the musician hero is the victim of mistaken identity and a botched police investigation; in *Young and Innocent* (1937) the musician turns out to be the criminal, and the 'wrong man' the hero. In *The Wrong Man* the chief musical interest derives from Manny Balestrero's work as a musician at the Stork Club. His scenes at the club, where he plays doggedly throughout his ordeal, recur regularly in the film, preparing us for the greater power and subtlety of Herrmann's music, which is used sparingly and to great effect in moments of intense emotion. The famous superimposition of Manny's face over that of the real hold-up man is accompanied by some of Herrmann's most delicate string and woodwind effects - a slow, tremulous figure which gives way to natural street sounds when the two faces coincide. In *Young and Innocent* the scenes at the Grand Hotel are even more memorably staged. The sequence is among the most brilliantly executed in all Hitchcock's films: as the camera tracks across the ballroom, the revelation of the drummer's twitching face is accompanied by the progressive disintegration of the music itself. The rhythm breaks down beneath the frowns of the bandleader, the drummer moves to the xylophone, and later crashes the drums and cymbals indiscriminately. It is a musical and aural representation of the chaos to be found beneath the surface of normal life, the theme of so many Hitchcock films.

Far from being a source of consolation or tenderness, let alone inspiration, the best music in Hitchcock often signals helplessness or despair. This is a personal judgement, of course, but let me give some examples. Certainly the best-known episodes in Bernard Herrmann's scores accompany moments of crisis, panic or violence. The brilliant climax at the Albert Hall in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* turns on a complete performance of the 'Storm-Cloud Cantata', a choral piece by Arthur Benjamin and D.B. Wyndham-Lewis, during which the clash of cymbals is meant to mask the noise of the assassin's gun. Here the music serves as the instrument of death itself; as Hitch once said, the percussionist doesn't know he's a murderer! Likewise, it is the fairground music in *Strangers on a Train* (1951) that accompanies Bruno's strangling of Miriam; and much of the soundtrack of *Rear Window* (1954), a miraculous mix of piano-playing, snatches of song and fragments of radio music, is an insistent and unsettling accompaniment to the human drama witnessed by James Stewart from his apartment. The *sadness* in Hitchcock is a quality not often remarked upon, and music has much to do with it. The endings of *Sabotage* (1936) and *I Confess* (1952) are among the saddest ever devised; likewise Manny's desolating line to his alter ego: 'Do you realise what you've done to my wife?' For me the final images of the deranged and broken Norman Bates are even more wounding than *Psycho*'s celebrated episodes of violence.

The most tragic of all Hitchcock's films is *Vertigo*, and nowhere is Hitchcock's perverse and oddly pessimistic use of music more apparent. The score is one of the composer's best. Dr Graham Bruce, who kindly lent me his excellent book on Herrmann's film scores[2] when I was writing this article, has pointed out that the music 'plays a large part in the establishment and reinforcement of the structural unity of the film, deriving the whole of its material from the first three major cues, and weaving the variants and developments into a complex web of structural associations.' But the scene that haunts music-lovers is the one in which Midge plays her Mozart record to Scottie in the hospital, hoping that it will cure his melancholia. While the music is heard - it is the second movement of Symphony No. 34, K.338 - Scottie remains withdrawn, catatonic, unresponding. And as she leaves the hospital Midge says to a doctor: 'I don't think Mozart is going to help at all.'

Poor Scottie, poor Mozart!

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Notes

1. Editor's note. In fact, one already has! I put Evan's inquiry up on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page, and was soon contacted by Kathie Coblentz, Assistant Project Director of the 'Hollywood Film Masters' multimedia project. Kathie's email message reads: 'I said to myself: I bet I can provide some enlightenment here. "Cera" is Italian for "wax" and "uomo" is Italian for "man". Ergo, Cer-uomo, Wax-man. ("Francesco" is of course the Italian equivalent of "Franz".)' Bravo, Kathie!

2. Bruce, Graham. 'Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative' (1985).

Coming Attractions

Analysis of *The Wrong Man* (revised version of article published in 'MacGuffin' 6); "What's so troubling about *Harry*?"; the sources of *Rear Window*; book reviews (incl. of 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' and long review of 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism'). Plus the usual features, incl. 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted..

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Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured Philip Kemp on "Hitching Posts" (re Hitchcock's influence) plus an analysis of *The Manxman* (number 18); *Vertigo* (17); *Foreign Correspondent* (16); *Spellbound* (15); Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14); *Young and Innocent* (13); *The Paradine Case* (12); *Vertigo* (11); *Notorious* (10); *The Lady Vanishes* (9); and *Torn Curtain* (8). These are the issues most recommended.

ODD SPOT: CASINO UNPOPULAR WITH CINEMA BOSS

This item isn't about a film by Martin Scorsese. Nor about the head of Warner Brothers. Rather, the casino in question is a government-run one that opened recently in Melbourne, Australia, and the cinema boss is the owner of a nearby Chinese cinema forced to close as a result.

According to Mr Raymond Yu, the famous Capitol cinema, which his firm acquired in 1989, suffered hugely when the casino started up in 1994. 'They [Chinese film patrons] spend their last $10 at the casino instead of going to the cinema or to restaurants', Mr Yu said.

His business had also been affected by the drop in quality of films from Hong Kong caused by the uncertainty over China's impending takeover there. To aggravate matters, the cost of the films had risen markedly.

Footnote. The Capitol, designed by noted architect Walter Burley Griffin (an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright) was completed in 1928. It has lately re-opened, under new management, showing mainstream films only. But there are no plans to screen Scorsese's *Casino*.

'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin @labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

The Doctor that turns out to be the villain, and later commits suicide in 105 across ?

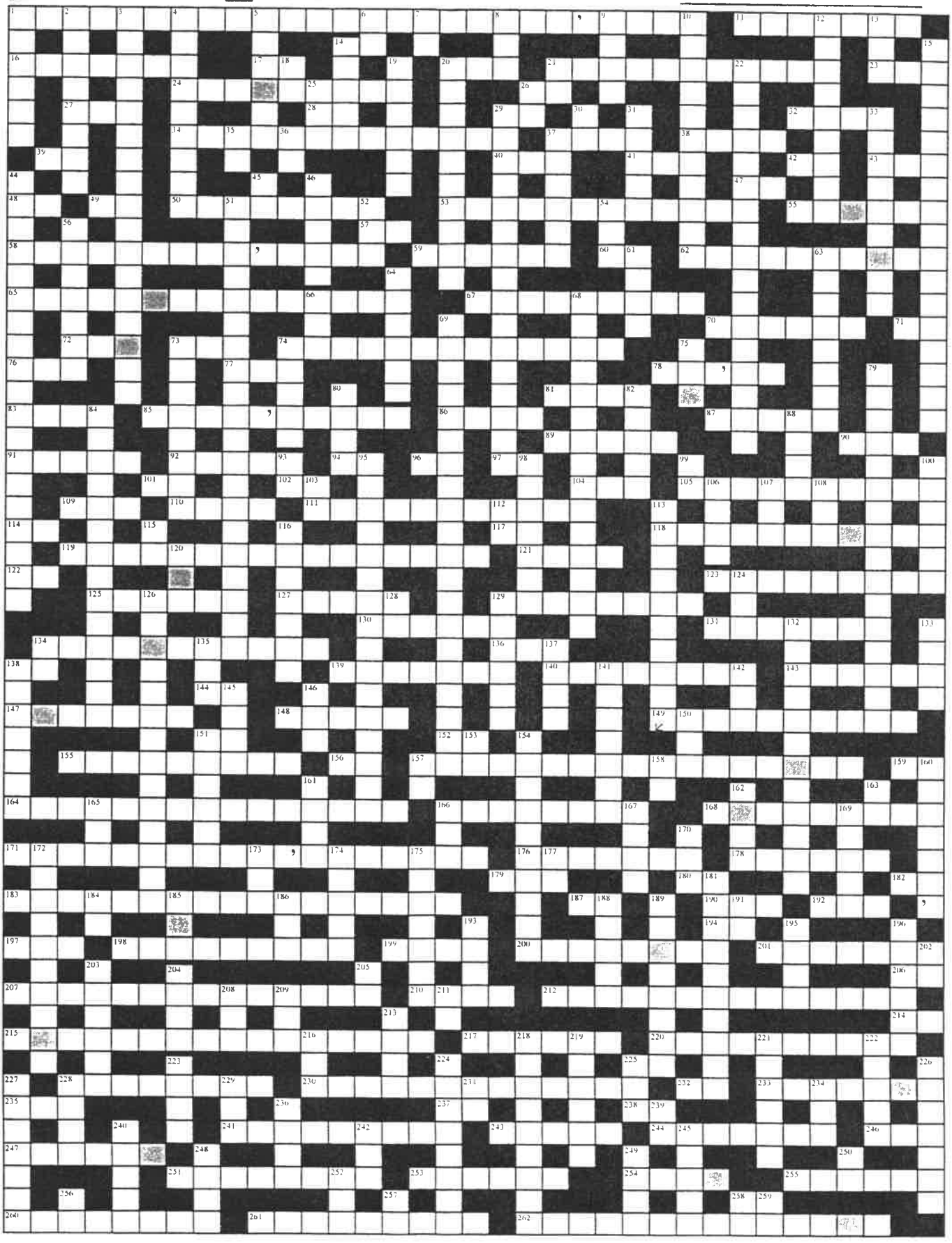
Number of films in 82 down ? ___

Number of films in 225 down ? ___

HITCH CROSSWORD MADE BY PATRIK WIKSTRÖM

What American city does the Stranger in the Empire State Hotel in 105 across come from ?

Name: _____



Supplement to 'The MacGuffin', #19, with our thanks to Patrik Wikström.

The number gives what square the word starts in, the letter says if it is: m=Movie title, t=TV title, n=Novel or play, f=First name, s=Surname, i=Initials or o=Other. The two questions at the top have their solutions in the grey squares in the crossword in random order, the left solution in the squares to the left, the other to the right.

Clues Across

1 t Audrey Meadows as Mrs. Bixby in a story by Roald Dahl (3.5.3.3.8.4)
11 m Hitch walks by outside a shipbuilding Co holding a flashlight 10 minutes into this film beginning with police chase on San Francisco roof tops (7)
14 i Mr. Hornblower in 10 down, parts in three more films by Hitch (1.1)
16 m Girl marries British nobleman but lives in the shadow of his late wife (7)
17 i The Cuban leader that was played by John Vernon in 91 across (1.1)
20 f This Actress had a big role in King Kong but a small one in 132 down (3)
21 m This silent film was based on a novel by Oliver Sandys (3.8) see 37 down
23 o 218 down last line "Alex, will ... come in please. I wish to talk to ..." (3)
24 m Silent film about spoilt rich girl´s life of luxury on her father´s profits (9)
26 i Actor in 3 films + 3 TV shows, namesake made music for 20 down (1.1)
27 f The detective ... Spencer that stakes out Verloc´s Cinema in 2 down (3)
28 i Musical Score for 207 across with Louis Levy as Musical Director (1.1)
29 i The Actress who plays Stella that bothers Jeff in 172 down (1.1)
32 f The Composer that Hitch visits to wind up his clock in 172 down (4)
34 m Comedy of marriage found not legal. Story by Norman Krasna (2.3.3.5)
37 s This Robert played Leslie Hennessy who tailed Haines in 22 down (4)
38 f Name of Prince which dancer gets involved with in Hitch´s first film (4)
39 i Together with James Stewart, this Actor had the most leading roles (1.1)
40 f The first firstname of the Actress who plays the agent in 215 across (3)
41 f Mr Keane´s wife Gay Keane was played by this Todd in 53 across (3)
42 i Handled tennisrackets in 22 down and a piece of rope in 110 across (1.1)
43 f Carole Lombard´s firstname as Miss Krausheimer in 34 across (3)
47 i As Margot Wendice this Actress did her first of three films by Hitch (1.1)
48 i Made the music for 129 down together with Ron Goodwin (1.1)
49 i Got an Academy Award Nomination as Mrs. Danvers in 16 across (1.1)
50 m Hitch is seen in newspaper ad for Reduco Obesity Slayer in this film (8)
53 m Beautiful woman of dubious past on trial for murder in "The ... ..." (8.4)
55 m Patricia´s first appearance in a film by her father (6) starts in 31 down
57 i Two leading silent roles in one year, as Roddy Berwick in 224 down (1.1)
58 m Sweetland are looking for a bride, secretly loved by housekeeper (3.7.4)
59 t This story about a snake is introduced by Hitch with pickpocket alarm (6)
60 i The Actor who plays the "real" Lester Townsend in 215 across (1.1)
62 m Laurita suffers as the wife of an alcoholic and the lover of a suicide (4.6)
65 t Sam is stopped by Trooper with wife´s corpse in the trunk (3.4.4.2.2)
67 t Film in which the police devour the murder weapon (4.2.3) see 33 down
70 s The Accused Diana Baring in 1 down was played by this Norah (6)
71 i This Actor played the annoying Robert Marvin in 118 across (1.1)
72 o Line in 215 across "Here´s the cabinet where they keep the liquor. Scotch, ... ,Vodka" Reply from mother: "and Bourbon. I remember when it used to come in bottles" (3)
73 o In first version of 69 down Bob & Clive finds the tabernacle of the ... (3)
74 m Grace is driving the same road on which she died 27 years later (2.5.1.5)
76 f The writer Isobel Sedbusk in 168 across was played by this Auriol (3)
77 o The only thing Marion Crane bought for the forty thousand dollars (3)
78 t Rick comes visiting his sister in "(....) ..... Dead" (5) starts in 81 across
81 t Rick´s sister´s son finds something in Rick´s suitcase (4) see 78 across
83 s In 125 across Mrs. Taylor gets a job at Rutland & Co for boss Sam .... (4)
85 t One hour TV film about a watchmaker, produced for Suspicion (4.1.5)
86 f Because of language problems Joan Barry dubbed this Actress (4)
87 m This film about quiet Bodega Bay contained 1360 shots, "The ....." (5)
89 s Madame Blanche´s surname as phony psychic in 20 down (5)
90 o TV film 56 down was filmed second but what number in broadcast (3)
91 m French agent works with American to dig out info on Russia´s involvment in Cuba (5)
92 s The Actor who plays two resembling characters in 157 across (5)
94 i Composer and Conductor for 262 across, 22 down and two more (1.1)
96 i Academy Award Nominations for scores to 16 across & 168 across (1.1)
97 i The alias for reporter John Jones played by Joel McCrea in 51 down (1.1)
101 i Wrote the best-selling novel that 91 across was based on (1.1)
102 i Production Company for 154 down, based on novel by du Maurier (1.1)
104 o Line from Thornhill to Vandamm in 215 across - "I didn´t realize you were an ... collector, I thought you just collected corpses" (3)
105 m Line from Alex Brulov in this film about guilt complexes - "The mind of a woman in love is operating on the lowest level of the intellect" (10)
109 f Lucy Prentiss plays the Mom in the Chester family in 81 across (3)
110 m Hitch wanted to do this film in one shot, also Hitch first colour film (4)
111 m True story about Manny Balestrero, bass player at the Stork Club (3.5.3)
114 i Wrote Storm Cloud Cantata for the first version of 69 down (1.1)
117 i As Mary Yellen in 154 down, this young Actress did her first film (1.1)
118 m Two agents pose as married on assignment in Switzerland to kill spy (6.5)
119 m The killer is seen behind the drums because of his twitching eyes (5.3.8)

Clues Down

1 m Herbert Marshall in his first talking picture, as known Actor in a jury (6)
2 m Based on the novel "The Secret Agent" by Joseph Conrad (8)
3 t Produced for Ford Startime, only colour film Hitch made for TV (8.2.1.6)
4 m Hitch´s and England´s first talking picture also made in silent version (9)
5 f Played the villain in 73 down, the suicidal Mr. Garmes in 105 across (6)
6 i Telegraph office clerk in 262 across, bird expert in 87 across (1.1)
7 i The initials for the Actor Hasse who plays Otto Keller in 63 down (1.1)
8 s This Marie played Joss Merlyn´s wife Patience in 154 down (3)
9 o Profession of the man in tall hat in kitchen Grant visits in 74 across (4)
10 m Family rivalry between the Hornblowers and the Hillcrists (3.4.4)
12 m The "first" Hitchcock, also known as "The Case of Jonathan Drew" (3.6)
13 f First name of the professional tennis player Haines in 22 down (3)
14 f/s Marnie´s surname and Captain Brodie´s first name in 118 across (5)
15 m Dublin family get in trouble during civil war, with Sara Allgood (4.3.3.7)
18 i Production Company for 74 across + 4 of the "5 lost Hitchcocks" (1.1)
19 f In 215 across she played Grants mother even though she was younger (6)
20 m Fake medium with boyfriend crosses paths with a pair of kidnappers (6.4)
21 i Has the leading role as young Charlie Newton in 262 across (1.1)
22 m Robert Walker in great role in film with merry-go-round climax (9.2.1.5)
25 o The assassin who shot the Prime Minister in 69 down only hit his ... (3)
26 i Musical Director for 1 down and 126 down. Conductor for 4 down (1.1)
29 t Mrs. Ballister´s husband was killed while mountain-climbing (3.7.6)
30 i Marlene Dietrich sings "The Laziest Gal in Town" in this role as ... (1.1)
31 m Todd plays murder suspect in this film made in London (5) see 55 across
33 t Mrs. Mary Maloney kills her husband Patrick (9) starts in 67 across
35 f The first name for The Sheriff in both 143 across and 87 across (2)
36 o Profession of Ganderbai in 59 across & Alex Brulov in 105 across (2)
37 m Title taken from the name of the theatre it is set in (6) starts in 21 across
44 m Was it Wiles gun, miss Gravely´s shoe or wife´s milkbottle that caused it? (3.7.4.5)
45 i Won Academy Award with Jay Livingston for a song in 69 down (1.1)
46 f Marnie´s horse that fell and broke his leg at Garrod´s Ranch (5)
51 m A newspaper sends reporter to Europe to get story on secret treaty (7.13)
52 o What Robert 'Bob' Rusk uses to commit murder in 129 down (3)
54 o In 143 across Marion is startled by Policeman when taking a long ... (3)
56 t Woman tells husband she´s been attacked, he clubs the man to death (7)
61 f Tobin was played by this actor in 73 down that also featured his wife (4)
63 m Priest hears murderers confession, gets accused of the crime himself (1.7)
64 s Ruth Roman in leading role in 22 down as daughter to Senator ..... (6)
66 o The number of Hitchcock films that Dame May Whitty made (3)
68 m Starts with a trans-European train delayed due to bad weather (3.4.8)
69 m A single crash of the cymbals ends a thrilling sequence (3.3.3.4.3.4)
73 m Ends with a famous chase scene at the Statue of Liberty in New York (8)
74 f The blackmailing witness played by Donald Calthrop in 4 down (5)
75 f In 11 across Konstantin Shayne plays Book Shop owner ... Liebl (3)
79 o Second WWII propagandafilm produced by Ministry of Information (8.8)
80 o The title that Laughton´s Judge Tommy Horfield has in 53 across (4)
82 s The Actress to appear in most films by Hitchcock (5)
84 m A murder goes wrong in this film by Hitchcock also shot in 3-D (4.1.3.6)
88 s This John played the part of Brandon Shaw in 110 across (4)
93 i Scored 74 across & 213 down + more TV films presented by Hitch (1.1)
95 m A young schoolteacher takes refuge in the Kentucky mountains (3.8.5)
98 s This Actor plays Verloc that hides agent operation behind cinema (7)
99 i After four films this Actor wanted the leading role in 215 across (1.1)
100 f Florence Bates, no relation to Norman, as Van Hopper in 16 across (6)
103 i The unknown Actor who had the "title" role in 44 down (1.1)
106 s As Anthony Keane this Actor did his second and last film for Hitch (4)
107 o The beginning of 31 down is famous because Jonathans story is a ... (3)
108 o One of few garments Marion is wearing in first scene in 143 across (3)
112 i Name of Aysgarth´s cousin played by Leo G. Carroll in 168 across (1.1)
113 n The novel was written by Josephine Tey (1.8) continues in 149 across
115 i Where does the murder of Lester Townsend take place in 215 across (1.1)
116 f Fat woman in Circus Troupe in 73 down played by Marie Le Deaux (7)
120 o This item that Jackie steals has the actual leading role in 81 across (3)
124 o What people would say instead of "yes" in the town 63 down was set (3)
126 m Title taken from Shakespeares "The Tempest", partly shot in Asia (4.3.7)
128 i The awaited Successor as Chief for Green Manors in 105 across (1.1)
129 m Richard Blaney is suspected for a series of sex murders in London (6)
132 t Only TV film with cameo by Hitch. Story by Roald Dahl (3.2.3.4)
133 s Suddenly Madame Kummer takes this lady´s place in 68 down (4)
134 i Production Company for two films, 110 across and 207 across (1.1)

Clues Across

121 f Grace presents her character while lighting up the room in 172 down (4)
122 i Wrote stories for TV and the novel that 143 across was based on (1.1)
123 o World War Two propaganda film with John Blythe made in French (3,6)
125 m This film starts with Marion Holland´s theft from Mr. Sidney Strutt (6)
127 f Mary Clare´s character in 68 down was called Baroness .... (5)
129 n 129 down is based on the novel "Goodbye Piccadilly,.., Leicester Sq." (8)
130 s Sylvia´s brother with the bomb in 2 down is played by Desmond ..... (6)
131 s This Michael portrays Honourable Charles Adare in 207 across (7)
134 m American scientist pretends to be a defector to get secrets from East (4.7)
136 o Tisdall steals a stone ... in the garden to give as present in 119 across (3)
138 i Agent Devlin´s boss in 218 down played by Louis Calhern (1,1)
139 n Play by Clemence Dane and Helen Simpson (3,4) starts in 148 across
140 n 118 across was based on a play that was adapted from this novel (8)
143 m The leading character checks in to a motel as Marie Samuels from LA (6)
144 i The Actress who portrayed Constance "Connie" Porter in 50 across (1,1)
147 m Boxers battle over their love for Nelly, played by Lilian Hall Davis (3,4)
148 n 1 down was adapted by Hitch/Mycroft from this play (5) see 139 across
149 n 119 across was based on this novel (3,7) starts in 113 down
151 i Won an Academy Award as Best Actress for 168 across (1,1)
152 i Played the part of Jill Cheyne, a glamorous dancer in 21 across (1,1)
155 n 105 across was based on this novel, The (5,2,2) see 166 across
156 i As Sam Loomis from Fairvale he was Marion Crane´s lover (1,1)
157 t A man´s everyday life is taken over by a duplicate of himself (3,4,2,2,6)
159 i The Production Company for 6 films in the mid thirties (1,1)
164 m This film about a tramp stumbling upon jewel thieves is Hitch 15th (6,9)
166 n The novel was written by Francis Beeding (8) starts in 155 across
168 m Wife believe husband´s trying to kill her in this Best Picture nominee (9)
171 t Middle-class housewife believes neighbor has murdered his wife (2,10,6)
176 o What title did Albert Wiles have on his tug boat on the East River (7)
178 f The first name of the detective Doyle in 172 down (6)
179 n One of two stories by Selwyn Jepson (3) continues in 175 down
180 i This Actress plays the maid who´s room Charters gets in 68 down (1,1)
182 f Dr McKenna´s wife, (Conway before marriage), in 69 down (2)
183 m A story about an Austrian Composer from a play by Guy Bolton (7,4,6)
187 i As Charters, cricket fanatic in 68 down he did 1 of 3 roles for Hitch (1,1)
190 o In the car chase in 74 across the police gets stopped by what animal (3)
192 s Barry Kane gets falsely accused in 73 down instead of this man (3)
194 o What Fred called his wife Emily, played by Joan Barry in 126 down (2)
197 n The play by Paul Anthelme,"(...) ... Consciences" (3) starts in 150 down
198 t Herbert kills his wife and moves to California but he´ll be back for ... (9)
199 f She meets Aysgarth in a first class carriage on the train in 168 across (4)
200 m Hitch first work as director in 1922 was a two-reeler never finished (6,2)
201 s This John did his first performance as an Actor in 118 across (7)
206 i Mrs Sebastian called him Dev in 218 down, what was his initials ? (1,1)
207 m This film with Bergman and Cotten was set in Australia in 1831 (5,9)
210 s This Eve disguises as Doris Tinsdale in 31 down to solve a murder (4)
212 t Sheridan donates his winnings to the Church, with Claude Rains (3,11)
214 i Walter Wanger produced 51 down for this Company (1,1)
215 m The film in which Praire Stop, Highway 41 has an important role (5,2,9)
217 s As Leonard he is rough with the man he thinks is George Kaplan (6)
220 m Fisherman & Lawyer in love for one woman, Hitch´s last silent film (3,7)
225 o The city that Kane leaves for Springfield after a fire in 73 down (1,1)
228 n This novel was especially written for Hitch (3,5) starts in 203 down
230 t Mr. Barnes is falsely accused of hit-and-run (3,5,5) starts in 213 down
232 i Lucie Mannheim plays this spy who runs into Hannay in 181 down (1,1)
233 s Nigel Bruce is funny as Beaky in 168 across, what was his surname ? (7)
235 f With Grace in Mogambo, but did not appear in any Hitchcock film (3)
237 i Production Company for 5 films in the fifties, including 84 down (1,1)
238 i Alexander Sebastian in 218 down and Father Amion in 212 across (1,1)
241 t Accident victim is believed dead. Paralyzed he is put in the morgue (9)
243 f The little kid who traded a dead rabbit for a frog in 44 down (5)
244 s Edmund Gwenn´s classical character in 183 across (7)
246 o Jesslyn Fax has a role as sculptress in 172 down, Miss Hearing ... (3)
247 s As Jennifer ..... in 44 down, Shirley MacLaine did her first film (6)
251 t Upperclass Millicent murders her two-timing boyfriend in "Wet ....." (8)
253 f Arbogast, the detective, who finds the Motel on the old highway (6)
254 f .... Thorwald, that had a nagging wife and a prying neighbour (4)
255 s Jack ....., Rebecca´s favorite cousin played by George Sanders (6)
258 i In 105 across "Peck" finds out his real initials from a cigarette case (1,1)
260 f Plays the part of George Fortesque Maximillian de Winter (8)
261 s Gets mistaken for George Kaplan, tries to use the name Jack Philips (9)
262 m Young girl realizes that her Uncle is the Merry Widow murderer (6,2,1,5)

Clues Down

135 i The leading character´s trademark in 215 across (on matchbox) (1,1,1)
137 n 168 across was based on this novel by Francis Iles, "Before the ...." (4)
138 n 20 down is based on a novel by Victor Canning, "The Rainbird ....." (7)
141 s This Tom acts as grieving husband Gavin Elster in 11 across (7)
142 o 34 across + 111 across are two of the films set in this city (1,1,1)
145 f Uncle Basil (Radford) played this game in 119 across, blind man´s .... (4)
146 o The number of Hitchcock films that Margaret Lockwood made (3)
150 n 63 down was based on this play,".. (...) Consciences" (3) see 197 across
151 f Played Uncle Charlie in 262 across and Sam Flusky in 207 across (6)
153 i Production Company for the two first English/German productions (1,1)
154 m This film with Laughton was set on the Coast of Cornwall in 1819 (7,3)
157 i As Melanie Daniels in 87 across, this Actress did her first film ever (1,1)
158 i Won an Academy Award for the innovative score to 105 across (1,1)
160 t To solve a murder, Brent hires an Actress to play ghost (7) see 169 down
161 o Uncle Charlie travels with train to Santa Rosa under the name Mr .... (4)
162 o Tisdall presents himself as Beachcroft Manningtree to Erica´s ... in 119 across (4)
163 i Production Company for 3 films, 16 across, 105 across & 53 across (1,1)
165 o The Actress who played the killer in 67 across has a middle name (3)
166 f Miss ... Kendall, that shoots George Kaplan with blanks in the café (3)
167 f This Actor could say, "My name is Rutland, Mark Rutland" (4)
169 t Suspect confesses to murder when seeing ghost (5) starts in 160 down
170 o In 125 across Marnie as Mrs. Mary Taylor spills this on her blouse (3)
172 m Hitch got his 4th nomination for Best Director. Story by Woolrich (4,6)
173 o The city where Alexander Sebastian´s organization gets infiltrated (3)
174 n 68 down was based on a novel by Ethel Lina White, "The Wheel ....." (5)
175 n A short story that 31 down was partly based on (7) starts in 179 across
177 i Made the music for 51 down (1,1)
181 m Organization of spies collecting information on behalf of the foreign office... (3,2,5)
184 i Ray Milland played this retired tennisplayer in 84 down (1,1)
185 o The title that shipwrecker Humphrey Pengallan has in 154 down (3)
186 i Production Company for the film shot partly in Rapid City (1,1,1)
188 s This John was sitting next to Hitch on a bus in one of his cameos (5)
189 f Kim Novak as Judy Barton that seems to be obsessed by ..... Valdes (8)
191 i Ivan Triesault plays the spy who kills Emil Hupka in 218 down (1,1)
193 f Leading Actor in two silent films by Hitch, Boxer in 147 across (4)
195 f In 119 across Edward Rigby played the China Mender, Old .... (4)
196 n 2nd story by Jepson that 31 down was based on,"..... the Constable" (6)
202 o What was the strange character Greenbow´s profession in 44 down (2)
203 n 11 across is based on this novel by Boileau/Narcejac (6) see 228 across
204 m German version of 1 down with Alfred Abel and Olga Tchekowa (4)
205 i U.S. rocket scientist Michael Armstrong is played by this Actor (1,1)
208 i The Production Company for 34 across,168 across and 218 down (1,1,1)
209 o A series of thefts takes place on the Riviera and the suspect is The ... (3)
211 i As Constance Peterson this Actress did her 1st of 3 films for Hitch (1,1)
213 t Only film Hitch directed for Alfred Hitchcock Hour (1,3) see 230 across
216 o What is Hitch wearing in both 4 down, 22 down and 53 across ? (3)
218 m Espionage tale written by Ben Hecht set in post-WW2 South America (9)
219 f In 218 down Ingrid Bergman portrays Miss ....., Huberman (6)
221 t Helen annoys Arthur so he grinds her up and feeds her to his chickens (6)
222 f This Actress did her first role in 53 across just as Louis Jourdan did (5)
223 s Everybody seemed to have trouble with Harry, what was his surname (4)
224 m Shows Roddy Berwick´s life fall apart in a series of misadventures (8)
225 i The Actor to appear in most films by Hitchcock (1,1,1)
226 f Played Timber Woods in 59 across and the detective in 172 down (7)
227 s Two leading roles as Pamela in 181 down and Elsa in 118 across (7)
228 s Thornhill´s secretary and frightened mother in the Tides Restaurant (4)
229 o What Hitch was lying in while presenting "Death Sentence" on TV (3)
231 i Only character in both versions of 69 down, acted by Fresnay/Gelin (1,1)
234 i Michael Wilding as detective with fun middle initial in 31 down (1,1,1)
236 s In 51 down Albert Bassermann portrayed Dutch diplomat Van .... (4)
239 i The Actor who played Prof. Wilhelm Otto Rentzler in 218 down (1,1)
240 t A man finds out he´s sent an innocent man to jail in "The perfect ....." (5)
242 s Laraine was Carol Fisher in 51 down and Doris sang in 69 down (3)
245 s The Dancer played by Georgine Darcy in 172 down, Miss ..... (5)
248 f Had the leading role in 31 down together with Marlene Dietrich (4)
249 o Bookstore in Copenhagen that has an important role in 134 across (4)
250 i Played the part of nice and friendly dancer Patsy Brand in 21 across (1,1)
252 o Hitch presented his daughter in leading role in "Into Thin ..." on TV (3)
256 i The Cuban traitor, Devereaux gets information from in 91 across (1,1)
257 i On screen as the Conductor at Royal Albert Hall in 69 down (1,1)
258 i Scored 134 across (Herrman rejected). Also initials for lead Actress (1,1)
259 i Small role as Sailor in 125 across, lead as Taxi Driver in 20 down (1,1)

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 20 | August 1996 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

FIRST THINGS first. Our recent issues have been below standard! My own analysis of *The Manxman* in issue 18 was particularly *laboured*, a word I use advisedly. I wrote the piece in what I call my 'labouring-at-the-coal-face mode', and I regret that no-one (me!) removed the detritus from what was dug out. Accordingly, I've decided to both declare that issue permanently out-of-print and to extend by one issue everyone's subscription that was then current. (So if your subscription was due to expire with the present number, you've actually got one more issue coming to you.)

Now, I need to indicate something of what happened, though I'll spare you my several horrendous experiences with computers (I touched on that last time!). Just as I began to write about *The Manxman*, someone contacted me and said that he wished to contribute his own Hitchcock article which would come close to filling the next issue - but that it had to *be* the next issue. Weakly, I compromised. I told the person that I'd both rein in my *Manxman* analysis and would run his article. In the event, the latter wasn't used, while my own article now shows (to me) every sign of where I was constantly avoiding needed explication. (As I also noted last time, that didn't stop the result from being called 'overlong'. Which surely goes to show how the length of an article is judged on its readability.)

Here's an example of where my article fell down. In it, I noted the scene set in Old Caesar's pub where among the fishermen attending a noisy meeting is an ancient fellow with a hoary beard. I remarked that the scene reminded me of an Ealing comedy, but didn't stop to specify how or why. Consequently my point seems arbitrary and even silly. What has a 1928 melodrama to do with (circa) 1950s comedy? Actually, I'd now insist on the 'connection'. The inclusion of the bearded fellow in the scene gives an excellent example of Hitchcock's pointed wit. The fellow's appearance is exaggerated not for, say, a satiric purpose à la the depiction of the priest with the crucifix in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), but rather out of a sense of sheer good fun - yet fun that manages to imply something important about the Manx fishermen's cause. The old fellow represents, as it were, the *tradition* of the fishermen whose very livelihood we've just learnt is under threat from foreign trawlers. And, yes, the best parallel I can suggest is with the scene set in the pub in *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953) where the Titfield villagers meet to oppose a threatened closure by the railway authority in London of their beloved local branch line. Into the sea of faces inside the pub director Charles Crichton works those of a retired engine driver (crusty Hugh Griffith) and a little old lady, the village's oldest member - played by wizened Edie Martin, a quintessential Ealing character if ever there was one.

Nor is that all there is to the 'Ealing connection'. For instance, Hitchcock's screenwriter friend Angus MacPhail worked for Ealing for a while. Further, we know that Hitchcock kept an eye on the British film scene after he moved to Hollywood (see previous 'MacGuffins'), and he definitely seems to have enjoyed comedies like *The Titfield Thunderbolt* and *Genevieve* (a box-office smash, about a vintage car) of the same year. So much so, that you can detect elements of both in Hitchcock's own *The Trouble With Harry* (1956). And as I hinted - but unfortunately *only* hinted - in the *Manxman* article, there are further interesting resemblances between *Harry* and *The Manxman* ...

At this point, I think of a passage in Agatha Christie's 'The Murder at the Vicarage' (1930) where someone says, 'I wish you'd solve the case, Miss Marple, like you did [when] Miss Wetherby's gill of picked shrimps disappeared. And all because it reminded you of something quite different about a sack of coals.' (Chapter XI) Miss Marple sees that the topic concerns intuition, and she says: 'Intuition is like reading a word without having to spell it out. A child can't do that because it has had so little experience.'

Well, much of Hitchcock's filmmaking was of a high-intuitive order - a point I'll come back to. But what I'm really thinking of now concerns how I was taken to task in the last 'MacGuffin' for having insufficiently argued a case! I accept the reproach, if perhaps for other reasons than the writer intended. To me, who practises meditation (after a fashion), argument sometimes seems almost uncalled for, at best a rather piecemeal way of *sharing* an experience, which is already a form of knowledge, with one's readers. But of course there's another take on all of this, and it's probably a whole lot

wiser than mine. When, in *Torn Curtain* (1966), someone says of Professor Manfred (Günter Strack) that 'he has a unique line in argument', I imagine Manfred may actually have been following Hitchcock's own credo. The speaker continues: 'he combines mathematical logic with romantic inconsistency'. In Hitchcock's case, his films *are* constructed with near-mathematical precision, i.e. they're 'well-argued' after their own fashion, even as they uphold their director's favourite aphorism, 'Logic is dull'. I promise to henceforth try and make 'The MacGuffin' follow a similar 'line' ...

Some hidden themes run through this 'MacGuffin'. One is precisely Hitchcock's romanticism, mentioned in the past by, notably, both François Truffaut and Professor Lesley Brill (my respected critic who said I didn't use sufficient argument). It was the Romantics, and especially the English Romantic poets, who taught us all to question mere ratiocination and to draw on things like intuition. Hence Camille Paglia can write: 'in Romanticism after Blake, femininity is never repressed. If the Romantics repress anything, it is masculinity.' ('Sexual Personae', 1991, p. 372) Much of Hitchcock's richest material comes from Romanticism; further, no-one more than the Romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821) despised what he called 'consequitive reasoning'. Previous 'MacGuffins' have suggested some Keatsian strains operating in Hitchcock, and this issue touches on others.

I trust readers enjoy the long article on *The Wrong Man* (1957). An earlier version appeared in 'MacGuffin' 6. I revised the article for publication in the book 'What Mensans Think', edited by Dr Geoffrey Marnell of Melbourne. Unfortunately the book was scuttled by American Mensa bureaucrats. I've chosen to leave the essay with minimal further changes.

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. The 'MacGuffin' Web Page has been overhauled lately.

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Vertigo 'restored'

As noted on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page, Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece, *Vertigo* (1958) - often voted one of the ten greatest films - has been refurbished. A preview of the new-look print was held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in June. Universal Studios will reissue the film at selected cinemas in the US this fall.

The restorers are James Katz and Robert Harris, the team that has already restored *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Spartacus*, and *My Fair Lady*. (Is Robert Harris, we wonder, the Robert A. Harris who in 1976 co-authored with Michael S. Lasky the informative book, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock'?)

'What we're doing here is unique', Katz said. 'We're creating a new preservation negative in 65mm from all the original large-format [VistaVision] elements. But instead of reduction printing in 35mm, we're transferring to 70mm. This has never been done before.'

No part of the restoration process proved to be straightforward. According to Harris, 'The camera negative is faded, the opticals weren't that great, the focus is soft and contrasty, and 1300 feet of rear projection process shots contributed to the deterioration.' Sadly, too, Bernard Herrmann's original music tracks, when found in a Paramount vault, had 'turned to vinegar'. Nonetheless, the soundtrack has now been reworked in DTS Stereo (digital sound) from a surviving 35mm composite optical print.

'The MacGuffin' is sure that our readers will be gratified to hear of the restoration. We have just one nagging doubt, and it concerns that description of the film's 'focus' as being 'soft and contrasty'. At several points in the original film - and not just the Mission Dolores scenes - Hitchcock clearly *intended* shots or whole scenes to be in soft-focus. (He used a similar technique in *Marnie* and *Torn Curtain*, amongst other films.) Have the restorers considered this and taken it into account?

Hitchcock and the centenary of cinema

As noted last time, a poll by London's respected 'Time Out' magazine, of directors, producers, actors, programmers, and critics, voted Alfred Hitchcock the best director in cinema history.

Meanwhile, the Hayward Gallery in London celebrated the centenary of cinema with an exhibition called 'Spellbound', exploring the relationship between film and art. The exhibition was named after Hitchcock's film for which Salvador Dali (1904-1989) designed the dream-sequence, and included an exhibit called '24 Hour Psycho' which proved to be no less than the Hitchcock classic, *Psycho*, slowed down to three frames per second so that you needed a whole day to see it.

Clive Huggett, who is a regular contributor to the British Mensa Film SIG's newsletter, 'Motion Pictures', writes: 'Other exhibits included a gallery done up to look like the props room in a film studio, paintings by Paula Rego based on early Disney features, an animated film about popcorn, films by Steve McQueen and Damien Hirst, a display of filing cabinets [?!] by Terry Gilliam, shooting scripts and storyboards from Ridley Scott's *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, scripts from *Apocalypse Now* and *Full Metal Jacket*, and the best exhibit, called 'In the Dark', designed by Peter Greenaway. The latter exhibit was like walking onto the set of one of Greenaway's films, and was built up over the 75 days that the exhibition was on.'

Coming back to Hitchcock now, Professor Sidney Gottlieb has sent us an email message to say that he's working on a multimedia essay about Hitchcock and Germany for the Hitchcock Multimedia Project. He's also 'becoming intrigued by the relationship between Hitchcock and early cinema' generally, and is starting to list whatever allusions/homages/ references he can spot in Hitchcock's films to D.W. Griffith, the Brighton School (G. Albert Smith and James Williamson), etc. 'I suspect that an unexplored aspect of Hitchcock's wit has to do with these subtle echoes and allusions!'

The Unabomber and Joseph Conrad

United States prosecutors believe they have found the man who inspired the Unabomber: novelist Joseph Conrad (1857-1924).

In particular, federal authorities have been struck by the parallels that can be drawn between Theodore Kaczynski - charged with the 18-year killing spree attributed to the Unabomber - and the character called the Professor in Conrad's 1907 novel, 'The Secret Agent'.

(Alfred Hitchcock filmed Conrad's novel and play of the same title in 1936, as *Sabotage*. There, the Professor had become the owner of a petshop which served as a 'front' for his anarchist-activity of making explosives. Behind the shop, too, lived the man's grown-up daughter whose child had been deserted by its father - reflecting the film's theme of 'unhappy families' and at least something of Conrad's worldly pessimism/realism.)

In the novel, the Professor is brilliant but deranged and unkempt. Like Mr Kaczynski, he had loathed technology and quit academia to live in a one-room hideaway, where he built a bomb whose target was an institution of science - in the novel, it's the Greenwich Observatory.

'I've the grit to work alone, quite alone, absolutely alone', says the Professor. Mr Kaczynski went for years with virtually no human contact.

Investigators believe the alleged Unabomber idolised the novelist, sometimes registering at a hotel - where he is believed to have posted his bombs - under the names Conrad or Konrad. The author's original name was Teodore Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski; the accused's full name is Theodore John Kaczynski.

Breathe Right, all right!

Alfred Hitchcock wanted to film a scene for *North by Northwest* (1959) inside Lincoln's nostril at Mount Rushmore. But his family insist that Hitchcock's own nose isn't up for grabs, and recently sued the makers of Breathe Right nasal strips for using it in advertising.

Hitchcock's daughter, Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell, and granddaughter, Kathleen O'Connell Fiala, filed a federal lawsuit saying two Minnesota companies made consumers believe that the famous director, who died in 1980, was 'speaking to readers of the advertisement and promoting the Breathe Right product'.

The advertisement allegedly showed a nasal strip across Hitchcock's distinctive nose, and was said to have been printed in many major publications. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages and an injunction barring further unauthorised use of Hitchcock's image.

New publications

These are taken straight from the 'MacGuffin' Web Page.

1. One of the more interesting recent books on Hitchcock is Paula Marantz Cohen's 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' (pb). It's reviewed in this 'MacGuffin'.

2. The May issue of 'Sight and Sound', pp. 28-31, contains an article on *Rebecca* by Alison Light. She argues that Hitchcock's mournful film about jealousy is a man's movie after all ...

3. In 'CineAction' #40, pp. 32-37, Deborah Thomas writes on "Confession as betrayal: Hitchcock's *I Confess* as Enigmatic Text". 'Despite its considerable complexities, *I Confess* has often been referred to in ways which don't fully take these into account. ...'

4. Professor Thomas Hemmeter has written a short article on "Hitchcock's Melodramatic Silence", claiming that 'Hitchcock's films demonstrate a defined but tenuous connection between silence and truth'. You can find the article in the 'Journal of Film and Video', 48.1-2 (Spring-Summer, 1996), pp. 33-40.

5. The publication, 'Projections 4½', issued in association with the French 'Positif', includes a long and brilliant essay on *Vertigo* by one of that film's greatest fans, the director Chris Marker, plus an article on *Psycho* by Jean-Claude Brisseau. This issue of 'Projections' is edited by John Boorman and Walter Donahue, and published in English by Faber and Faber.

6. Following on its splendid Hitchcock-issue (#21), the latest 'Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror' concludes its two-part interview with screenwriter John Michael Hayes. Issue #22 has other Hitchcock-material too. A year's subscription to the magazine costs $20 US, and the address for all correspondence is P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.

7. The 1995-96 'Hitchcock Annual' (172 pp.) is still available. An article in it we rather liked was Sarah Street's "Hitchcockian Haberdashery". The new address of the 'Annual' is P.O. Box 2568, New London, NH 03257, and individual subscriptions for individuals in the US cost $7 for one year, $12 for two years. Outside the US, a single copy (individual rate) costs $9.

(Readers are urged to send us brief details if they come across further interesting recent articles or publications.)

LETTERS

J. Lary Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

Thanks for the British National Film Theatre 'Early Hitchcock' program you sent me. Did you notice the absence of *Young and Innocent* and *Elstree Calling*? Here are my observations:

The titles. I suppose they're still using Peter Noble's wretched 'Index' for their authority on film titles. The same mistakes arise: e.g. *The Secret Agent* instead of *Secret Agent*, the incorrect US title of *Sabotage* (it should be *The Woman Alone* and not *A Woman Alone*). I have never seen any actual performance citations, release listings, or reviews under any of the titles *When Boys Leave Home* (for *Downhill*), *The Shame of Mary Boyle* (for *Juno and the Paycock*), *East of Shanghai* (for *Rich and Strange*). Ironically, they don't have an 'aka' for *The Lodger*, which was shown and reviewed in the US as *The Case of Jonathan Drew*. And they don't give *The Lodger* its subtitle (*A Story of the London Fog*). (Why don't they just leave out all of these aka's and go with the original British titles?!) Can you imagine a Shakespeare Festival where they don't get the names of the Poet's plays right? And here is the National Film Theatre showing the early works of their greatest director with wrong and irrelevant titles - what idiots!

The schedule. The program planners have done their cruel viewer-torturing and brain-numbing pairing of the two versions of *Blackmail* and the two versions of *Murder!*. (The Palo Alto, California, Hitchcock festival of 1993 committed a similar

barbarism.) We should have a symposium on the programming and recommended pairings of Hitchcock films! In the London presentation, the National Film Theatre attempted to show 24 feature films plus the two Ministry of Information films on 18 evenings. Thus they had to pair six feature films. That was the problem.

I think that by stating some general principles, some logical pairings will emerge. Here is a first cut on the principles:

a. A dramatically heavy item, such as *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game*, or *The Manxman*, should be shown by itself.
b. Rarities, if they must be paired, should be paired with the classic and familiar.
c. Similar themes could be paired, if they were stylistically different; and conversely. (As an example of 'c', an ideal pairing is *Waltzes From Vienna* with *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.)
d. Light item with contrasting light (e.g. *Champagne* with *Number Seventeen*).

[Editor's note. As a former programmer for a university film group, and a former film teacher - giving attention to matters like the order in which films were screened in a syllabus - I empathise with Lary Kuhns in these matters. Lary's letter contained more: e.g. about how the two versions of *Blackmail* - silent and sound - should always be thought of as separate, indeed as works in separate art forms. See also 'Bloopers' in this issue, where I apologise to Lary for errors I made in printing his views last time.]

Adrian Martin, Glen Iris, Victoria, Australia.

'MacGuffin' 19 was a bit of a surprise - all 'bits and pieces' pretty much; personally I missed the standard 'long article' by Ken Mogg, which never seems 'overlong' to me! (I agree completely with your comments on the need for in-depth pieces.) But it's certainly an interesting issue, especially (for me) the letters and the Conference report.

On the matter raised in 'MacGuffins' 18 and 19 concerning Hitchcock's 'emotional range', I respect the points you have already made about this topic. But one day I would like to read you tackling this issue more directly - simply because, when push comes to shove, I think a lot of film fans (myself, at moments, included) do find Hitchcock's work a bit cold, mechanical and limited. Such heresy for a 'MacGuffin' subscriber, I know! (cheque enclosed).

[Editor's note. In the first place, Adrian's letter is too kind, or too silent, about things I wrote in 'MacGuffin' 18 - see Editorial this issue. Adrian, let me say that, as we're supposed to be pals, I'd like you to be even more forthright in any future feedback! As for the matter of Hitchcock's 'emotional range', by now I've already had the chance to say to you - and Philip Kemp - in private that I agree with you in one way, but not in another. I'll go public on this when there's space in these pages to do so. Meanwhile, did you notice Dr Garrett's comment last time on the essential difference between Hitchcock and Brian De Palma? Oh, and everyone again please see 'Bloopers' this issue, where we acknowledge some slips picked up by Adrian.]

Andrew Crowley, 4 Somerville, Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Irish Republic. Email: <andrewc@indigo.ie>.

I wonder if you can help me? I'm looking for postal addresses of Hitchcock fan clubs or societies anywhere in the world. I would be grateful if you, or your readers, could send me any.

Philip Kemp, London, England.

More on the 'Early Hitchcock' season! *The Farmer's Wife* [1928] isn't top-drawer Hitch, perhaps - like quite a few of his early play-derived movies (*Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game*) it feels constrained by the original, and I did find myself getting rather impatient as the action creaked on towards its grindingly predictable conclusion. Hitch might have done well to drop [Farmer Sweetland's] wife-hunting episode no.4 (the barmaid), which doesn't really add much; and given the story's basic premise, it's hard to see how anyone could avoid making the farmer seem a complete dolt. (I couldn't help thinking I'd love to see a version where Minta turns round and says, 'Too late, you great lummox! I got fed up waiting for you and now I'm shacked up with Churdles Ash.') Still, there's a lot of enjoyable humour, especially the fine set-piece of Thirza tapper's tea-party, and sly little touches like all the by-play with the farmer's various jackets. (By the way, I think I recall reading somewhere that Lillian Hall-Davies' career fell apart a few years later and she killed herself. Sad, if true.)

Talking of early Hitch, during a recent trawl through the BFI's files of 'Kinematograph Weekly' I came across a couple of items I thought might interest you. One is Miles Mander's account of making *The Pleasure Garden* in Munich. The other is a review of the same film which, since it's of a trade showing (preceding the film's release by almost a year), may well be the first review of a Hitchcock film to appear anywhere. Copies of both items enclosed.

Very interesting to read what Lary Kuhns had to say [in 'MacGuffin' 19] about *Waltzes From Vienna*. Maybe I misjudged it; I must try to see it again. Alas, I was abroad when the NFT showed it this time.

[Editor's note. Thanks hugely, Philip. The 'Kinematograph Weekly' review of *The Pleasure Garden* follows immediately. I'll try to fit in the Miles Mander piece at the end of this issue, but will otherwise include it next time.]

Extract from 'Kinematograph Weekly', March 25, 1926, p. 54:

Reviews of the Week

The Pleasure Garden
W. and F. (Gainsborough-Emelka). Anglo-German. 7,808 feet [about 90 min]. Released January 14, 1927.

Story - Patsy Brand, chorus girl, befriends a new-comer, Jill Cheyne, who is engaged to Hugh Fielding. Hugh goes East, and Jill angles for a prince, leaving Patsy's care. Patsy marries Levet, who is also going East. In the East Levet keeps a native girl, and Patsy, borrowing money, pays a surprise visit, to find him drunk in her embraces. Hugh is down with fever, having learnt that Jill is to marry the Prince. Patsy goes to nurse him. Meanwhile, Levet murders the native girl, and drags Patsy off to his bungalow, where he attempts to kill her. She is rescued in time, and Levet is shot. Hugh and she face life together.

The main feature [of this film] is the excellent first production of Alfred Hitchcock. The story is unpleasant and rambling, but the new director makes the most of it.

Acting - As Patsy, Virginia Valli is quite good, and Miles Manders [sic] plays excellently as the human wreckage, Levet.

John Stuart has little to do as Hugh, but does it well, while Carmelita Geraghty is satisfactory as Jill Cheyne.

Some light relief is very well supplied by Ferd. Martini and Florence Helmingen in character parts of a landlady and her husband.

Production - Considering the indifferent story, which is a weak edition in effect of 'White Cargo,' Alfred Hitchcock has done marvels. There is nothing conventional about his methods, and he manages to hold the interest with clever detail work and suggestive touches.

The death of Levet is a fine piece of work, and there is a naturalness about the way he [Hitchcock] handles the varied scenes, whether back-stage[,] in humble lodging-house or in extravagantly set flat.

In spite of the fact that there is little real connection between the two chorus girls' story [sic], Hitchcock keeps the continuity smooth and well developed.

Settings and Photography - Settings vary from palatial hotel to Patsy's lodging-house, and C. Wilfred Arnold has done his work extremely well. The atmosphere of theatre and tropical bungalow are alike excellently conveyed. Baron Ventimiglia's photography is good, although night lighting is somewhat weak.

Box-office Angle - Quite good booking of its type, particularly on the production merits. It is not a picture for family halls, as the effect-generally is sordid.

[Editor's note. It's interesting that Hitchcock's film is described as a - 'weak' - version of the 'White Cargo' story. That warhorse of a play, which itself seems to owe something to Somerset Maugham's 'Rain', was written in 1924 by Leon Gordon. In it, various white rubber planters in the tropics go literally crazy over the scheming native girl called Tondelayo. At least three film versions of the story were made - in 1929, 1930, and 1942 - and in the last of these Hedy Lamarr played Tondelayo. The latter version also incorporated elements of a novel called, significantly enough, 'Hell's Playground', by Vera Simonton, the adaptation being done by Leon Gordon, i.e. the play's original author.]

BOOK REVIEW

Cohen, Paula Marantz: 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' (The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1995; 198 pp, pb)

This work of the artist, this struggle to discern beneath matter, beneath experience, beneath words, something that is different from them, is a process exactly the reverse of that which, in those everyday lives which we live with our gaze averted from ourself, is at every moment being accomplished by vanity and passion and the intellect, and habit too, when they smother our true impressions, so as entirely to conceal them from us, beneath a whole heap of verbal concepts and practical goals which we falsely call life.

- Marcel Proust, 'À la recherche du temps perdu',
in the Terence Kilmartin translation (1992), p.392

Dickens and other Victorian novelists had insisted upon the uniqueness of each of their most ordinary characters, setting the stage for the comprehensive unmasking of individual motives that would characterise later novels like Conrad's. Hitchcock, one might say, was trying to effect a return from a new place - to reproduce those universal values that psychological novels had picked apart, and to reweave those values with images rather than words.

- Paula Marantz Cohen, pp. 42-43

If only Cohen had gone on with her perception here, her book might have been incisive. She has just noted how Hitchcock, the son of lower middle-class Cockney-Catholics, came from the very masses described with such fear and loathing by Joseph Conrad in his novel 'The Secret Agent' (1907). And she has noted Hitchcock's ambivalence towards such masses.[1] At the end of *Sabotage* (1936), adapted from Conrad's novel, 'Hitchcock has his hero and heroine disappear into the crowd, testifying to their affinity with ordinary people and their eagerness to return to an anonymous existence' (42). But the tone of that ending is far from triumphant.[2]

What Cohen *doesn't* give us here is any description of 'those universal values' which Hitchcock would now try to reweave in 'images rather than words'. By taking 'universal values' for granted - or, rather, by simply not asking what they might be - I think Cohen misses a chance to go to the heart of much of Hitchcock's future filmmaking technique - a technique involving his use of 'subjective-style'. Let me start, then, by indicating what I mean by that term. When a 'New York Times' journalist visited the set of *Marnie* (1964), Hitchcock told him that he was currently doing 'mental processes'. The scene in question showed the Rutland main office, and involved shifting points of view. In general, I see subjective-style or subjective-technique as referring to how the film makes the audience undergo sets of responses exactly analogous to ones experienced by the characters. Often Hitchcock would manage this in surprisingly bold ways. For instance, an entire film (or half a film) might be told from a particular character's *psychological* viewpoint, regardless of whoever's literal viewpoint prevailed in a given scene.[3] Or a mix of composition and camera-movement might be used to convey a specific emotion, as when in *The Birds* (1963) the camera pulls slowly back across the Brenners' living-room, leaving an expanse of blank ceiling. Various people rise into the frame in turn, each in a separate close-up, and it hardly needs someone to say of the hostile birds, 'They're gone!', such is our *palpable* relief. The audience's near-visceral emotion corresponds to what is felt - individually and collectively - by the characters.

Very little of this sort of thing is noted by Cohen. (To be fair, she makes some good points about Hitchcock's purposeful use of neutral or ambiguous images, as in *Sabotage* and *Family Plot*.) You get the impression that had Hitchcock in the mid-1940s sought her advice on how to emulate the novelistic depiction of character, she would simply have told him to hire himself an actress like Ingrid Bergman and then take the camera in close. Which, though it's excellent advice as far as it goes, would still have been doubly ironic. As Cohen herself writes, David Selznick, who 'managed' Bergman, 'helped Hitchcock achieve a greater appreciation of the *limits* of cinematic representation with respect to inner states of mind and emotion' (88, my emphasis). By the same token, I believe that Hitchcock was thereby stimulated to find *new* ways of extending the expressive powers of the camera. Unfortunately, because Cohen hardly sees this salient development that occurred in Hitchcock's cinema, her analysis of *Spellbound* (1945) in her book's Chapter 3 is very meagre.[4]

Related to all of this is something else about 'those universal values' that Cohen mentioned but didn't stop to define. I have no quarrel with her description of the basic difference between 'The Secret Agent' and *Sabotage*:

> *... Conrad was ultimately less interested in the way social institutions and roles can be corrupted or compromised than in a deeper kind of confusion at the heart of all human action. This is where Hitchcock, in making the adaptation, parted ways with his source.* (32)

But this time what Cohen doesn't report is that though Conrad's theme of 'muddle' or confusion scarcely enters into Hitchcock's current film, it very arguably provides the basis of several of his films from the 1940s onwards. To put that another way, Conrad's brand of 'pessimism' only appears in Hitchcock's work from about the time of *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). Coincidentally or not, that was also the film about which Hitchcock said that at last he had a story that gave him time to incorporate plenty of character details.

Now we approach the crux of my argument. As scholars have lately come to see, Conrad's pessimism was in no small measure derived from his reading of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).[5] So, too, was Proust's, whose scepticism about 'verbal concepts and practical goals' I've quoted at the head of this review. Accordingly, it's no accident that Conrad's 1907 novel and Proust's 1913 one both concern themselves with what Cohen calls 'a ... confusion at the heart of all human action'. But don't misunderstand me! Though I've suggested that Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* marks the onset in his work of a new pessimism, I'm far from claiming that film to be thoroughly 'Conradian', much less Proustian! What I would like to note is the innovation of what I've called Hitchcock's subjective-technique allied to the 'universal values' his films manage to invoke visually without actually stating. (How could they *state* them? None of the characters knows in an intellectual sense what they are.) And the lessons to be drawn therefrom do seem to me to be similar to those implicit in Schopenhauer's twin-concepts of Will (roughly, life-force) and Representation (mere appearance - that which, as Proust says, 'we falsely call life') ...

Earlier I left out Cohen's comment on Hitchcock's likely path after *Sabotage*: how he would need for the time being to curtail certain of his 'indulgences' (such as showing us young Stevie Verloc and a puppy being blown up in a bus) if he were to continue 'to reach and shape a mass audience' (43). Cohen comes back to this point a few pages later. In *Frenzy* (1972), she tells us, another brutal moment occurs - a strangulation - but now death 'seems not just jarring and unsettling, the destiny of the vulnerable and the weak, but true and inescapable, part of a larger pattern of deaths that will include our own' (49). What has happened is that Hitchcock has made a film whose 'entire fabric supports the gratuitousness of the death'. But then, you could say that just as Hitchcock's films from *Shadow of a Doubt* onwards become more pessimistic, so they also begin to include hands-on encounters with death (like the deathly struggle of the two Charlies on the moving train) that serve increasingly as palpable tokens of the world's destructive Will.[6] In turn, Hitchcock increasingly finds ways of engaging the very Will - in both its malign and benign aspects - of his audience.[7]

True, at the end of each film he invariably cools things down again, so that you feel vaguely aware that something of consequence has vanished.[8] Yet I wonder if he isn't at this moment doing no more and no less than simply restore us to our normal state of 'confusion', to our 'everyday lives which we live with our gaze averted from ourself'?

* * *

Cohen's main thesis can be simply stated. She suggests that Hitchcock 'spent his career juggling the two faces of Victorianism: the feminine legacy of feeling and imagination associated with the domestic novel and the masculine legacy of law and hierarchy ... associated with dominant institutions and values' (3). In particular, she identifies the period 1939-c.1960 as that in which Hitchcock sought 'to reclaim, for cinematic use, the novelistic concept of character' (2). As the same period roughly coincides with when Hitchcock's daughter, Patricia, was growing up, appearing in three of her father's films, and getting married, Cohen suggests that some sort of direct influence was operating here - she calls it 'the daughter's effect'. She defines the daughter's effect as 'a tendency to represent women as pressures on the plot, symbols of a subjectivity that both entices and threatens men' (8).

None of this is very contentious. By the same token, nor is it very convincing. For example, instead of claiming the influence of a daughter's effect on Hitchcock's work, Cohen might (you feel) just as well have looked at the evolution of the English crime novel and claimed that as an influence. In 1944 Christianna Brand's 'Green for Danger', set in a military hospital in Kent at the height of the Blitz, was published. It was an immediate success, leading to it's being filmed a year later by Sidney Gilliat, when it starred Alistair Sim as Detective-Inspector Cockrill. About the novel, H.R.F. Keating wrote:

> *It is a splendidly worked-out detection puzzle, as good as any in the field. It also has substantial characters in acknowledgment of the gradual move in detective fiction away from mere mechanical figures and towards characters who evince the darknesses of real life; in effect, the move from the detective story to the crime novel.*[9]

This could almost be Cohen describing the deepening in Hitchcock's work that took place after he moved to America with his family in 1939. Here's my point. Several years earlier, the shift from the detective story to the crime novel had already begun, and the instigator had been another woman, Dorothy Sayers. To quote H.R.F. Keating again, Sayers 'made her characters increasingly like the figures-in-depth to be found in the pure novel, a development soon well taken up'.[10] That development continued, even to the present day. In large measure, women writers like Brand, Patricia Highsmith, P.D. James, and lately Ruth Rendell, have seen to that.[11] So it seems permissible to ask whether the content of Hitchcock's American films wasn't as much the sign of an attempt to keep his work 'English' - and thus distinct from the 'hard-boiled' American crime story - as it was the reflection of 'pressure' exerted by his daughter, which is what Cohen suggests.[12]

For my part, I often see Hitchcock as working in English 'grotesque' and 'thriller' traditions pioneered by Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Cohen makes a fair point about Dickens when she says that his 'late novels, if only by their sheer heft, signal an obsessive drive ... to write against the grain of his conventional plots' (16). She cites his sympathetic treatment of the adulterous Edith Dombey (née Granger), to which I would add his no-less sympathetic and understanding portrayal of the 'fallen' Lady Dedlock in 'Bleak House' (1853). That's a novel, by the way, full of 'Hitchcockian' effects (for instance, a possible precursor of the pointing jester in *Blackmail*). As for sympathetic treatment of female characters who find themselves ostracised or beyond the pale, isn't that also a mark of Hitchcock's work? Think of (arguably) Maddalena Paradine (*The Paradine Case*, 1947), Charlotte Inwood (*Stage Fright*, 1950), and the heroine of *Marnie*. I've little doubt that Hitchcock's portrayal of the streetwalkers in the unfilmed *No Bail for the Judge* would have been discreetly 'sympathetic', too.[13]

Now, Cohen implies that the 'sheer heft' of Dickens's late novels brought him to a position embracing the 'feminine' as well as the 'masculine' outlook. And yet, more fundamental still than masculine and feminine identities is the identity that a person experiences on those - admittedly rare - occasions when individual will is surmounted or suspended. Aesthetically (and/or ethically), that's a Schopenhauerian idea, of course, though I'm also tempted to cite Walter Pater's dictum, 'All art tends to the condition of music'![14] In the first chapter of her book, Cohen writes:

> *The idea of an internal life is what literary prose is able to deliver; it can depict a place hidden within the self that connects to a world of action and things.* (6)

But she shies away from describing the significance of that 'place hidden within the self' whose essential nature surely *isn't* exactly the same as (feminine?) descriptive prose, just as it certainly isn't the same as a (masculine?) world of action and things ...[15]

I've a reason for mentioning this largely unacknowledged aspect of Cohen's book (apart from the fact that I think it's *there*, and can be pointed out). I've already said that, though Cohen sees certain developments and patterns in Hitchcock's work, I find her actual explanations of them not very convincing. Perhaps it would be truer to say, 'not very helpful'. For example, she observes (24) that Hitchcock's movies exemplify how narrative film tends to effect 'a kind of compromise between ... two conceptions of character - one fixed (allied to a traditional male identity), the other in process (allied to a female novelistic identity)'. Which I dare say is broadly true, yet *not* basic. After all, a long time ago Schopenhauer's concepts of 'intelligible' (noumenal) character and 'empirical' (phenomenal) character could already have told us that a part of character is indeed fixed, but that it is virtually fixed at or before birth - for either sex. (Schopenhauer allows for a third type of character, which he calls the 'acquired' character.)[16] I think that anyone who has observed very young babies or even, say, kittens, and then watched them grow up, will sense that Schopenhauer is right in this. And because the 'intelligible' character virtually partakes of the Will itself, everything that I've reported above about Conrad's and Proust's (and Hitchcock's?) most fundamental insights seems to me to be supported and confirmed.[17]

* * *

Mind you, Cohen's book in effect responds to my criticism of it! In her analysis of *Rope* (1948), Cohen writes:

> *Whereas nineteenth-century novels strove to depict character as driven by multiple, often contradictory, motives, nineteenth-century philosophy sought to give voice to 'truth,' either in the form of reasoned argument or by oracular pronouncement.* (91)

As examples of the 19th-century philosophers she means, Cohen cites Nietzsche (who was much influenced by Schopenhauer) and Carlyle. She notes that both of these thinkers decried a 'feminised' culture that had lost touch with an

ideal of manly heroism (92). In Hitchcock's film, of course, the two gay murderers 'justify' their crime by appealing to (a travesty of) Nietzschean doctrine. Cohen draws this conclusion:

> *The film does not condemn homosexuality or Nietzschean philosophy. What it does condemn is a certain kind of relationship to these ideas ... that would find in them a whole meaning, an answer that blocks out other, alternative forms of interpretation and relationship. Homosexuality thus becomes a code for ... imagining the world with the women dropped out.* (95)

Earlier in the chapter Cohen had made a statement that I suspect might offend some homosexuals: 'In Lévi-Strauss's terms, ... women are indeed ordering functions in society, and without them, men regress into barbarism' (90). But she also notes astutely that Janet (Joan Chandler) is characterised by the film as somewhat fickle and is dressed in an unflattering dress that makes her look pinched and uncomfortable (98).

What Cohen has done here is put her finger unwittingly on Hitchcock's use of subjective-style. Everything about the film's design, including the rather gaudy set and the 'continuous' and showy movement of the camera, and also a hinted patronising attitude not *just* to women but to the lives of most other people, is intended to draw the viewer into the psychological world of its main characters - the better to shatter that world later with the opening of the window and the firing of the (symbolic) gun. Yet, as I've tried to suggest, the mounting suspense of the film and the use of more direct techniques provide an analogue of the invisible presence and working of Will; and the opening of the window to let in fresh air is no more than a hopeful gesture. In other words, the underlying problem of man's inhumanity to man - further evoked on a broad scale by the film's references to the War - remains unsolved. And as Schopenhauer insisted, that problem and Will go hand in hand.[18]

Accordingly, if Cohen should want to accuse this review of being too metaphysical, or of 'blocking out' her own interpretation, I would respond that the metaphysics seems to me to be right there in the film, and can be felt. Moreover, the film works hard, as I've tried to show, to implicate us in that metaphysics, not least by making the viewer's own line-of-inquiry resemble at so many points that of the ambiguously-presented Rupert (James Stewart).[19]

* * *

In at least three of the four films that James Stewart made for Hitchcock, his character until just before, or just after, the film begins has been rather *too* virile. Or perhaps the character has just been too much like the typical open and trusting - yet manly - James Stewart persona. In any event, I much appreciated part of Cohen's reading of *Rear Window* (1954). There, she takes issue with Donald Spoto's description of the film as a lesson in introspection, by which Spoto means that Jefferies's window-shopping is an enactment of the nurse Stella's remark that we should 'get out of our houses and look in'. Cohen says that this interpretation 'assumes that there has been all along something for Jefferies to look into' (112). She adds:

> *As Peter Middleton has argued in his discussion of masculinity and subjectivity in modern culture, where masculinity has been defined as an active and externally directed expression of power, 'the inward gaze is a vacant one.'* (112)

This fits with how certain other male characters in Hitchcock's films visibly grow and become potentially, or incipiently, more inward. Thus you have the trajectory undergone by Roger O. Thornhill (Cary Grant) in *North by Northwest*, where the significance of his middle initial is realised in the film's central scene - a vast emptiness that suddenly becomes very threatening. (Later in the film, ambiguous signs of emergent life occur.)[20] Similarly, the encounter by Armstrong (Paul Newman) mid-way through *Torn Curtain* (1966) with a huge mandala in the Berlin Museum marks a turning-point that may see him finally acknowledge his need for spiritual growth. And of Scottie (James Stewart) in *Vertigo* (1958), Cohen points out that whatever his underlying patriarchal power fantasy, which finally kills Madeleine/Judy (Kim Novak), he himself is refashioned by their relationship, losing his basic scepticism and sarcasm and gaining a new willingness to feel deeply and tolerate the irrational and the ambiguous (138).

So this book is not without its stimulating passages plus an appreciable effort at 'staying honest' about the films.[21] On the other hand, it isn't what I'd call an inspired read. Victorianism isn't brought to life or made interesting, something which I would have thought hard for an author on that topic to manage! The book also lacks all sense of Hitchcock's having gone to school in the German Expressionist cinema of the 1920s (though this had its roots in the 19th century), indeed of having gone to school in the cinema at all. I particularly can't agree with Leonard Leff that the chapter on *The Wrong Man* (1957) and *Vertigo* is a highlight. And, speaking now of a broader expressiveness in Hitchcock's work, I miss an appreciation by Cohen of how the later films don't *just* represent a 'dissolution' of his earlier preoccupations, such as the

idea of the family. If it's indeed true that all art tends to the condition of music, then it seems to me that Hitchcock's under-appreciated last film, *Family Plot* (1976), is a charming piece of 'music', and altogether too elusive and scintillating for the sort of theory that Cohen wields here.[22]

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Notes

1. In this, Hitchcock was typical of many intellectuals and others of their circle at the time. Catholics were certainly not exceptions. In 'The Intellectuals and the Masses' (1992), pp. 82-83, John Carey cites the cases of writers Hilaire Belloc and Graham Greene. Belloc advised fellow Catholics to 'spread the mood that we are the bosses, the chic, and that the man who does not accept the Faith writes himself down as suburban'. Of Greene, Carey says that he constructed his masterpiece, 'Brighton Rock' (1938) around the idea that by comparison with Catholics ordinary mass mankind does not truly exist at all.

2. Analysing *Young and Innocent* (1937) in 'MacGuffin' 13, I noted how a very principle of the film's suspense involves an oscillation between 'exposure' and 'modesty', public spectacle and privacy/retreat. (Having now read Marcia Landy's account of Hitchcock's 1933 *Waltzes From Vienna*, with its strong voyeuristic motif, in 'British Genres: Cinema and Society, 1930-1960', pp. 72-73, I suspect a precedent exists in that film.) The motif seems playful enough as we watch, of course, but it may indicate something in Hitchcock's thinking. There's a similar motif operating in *North by Northwest* (1959) - see a note about that film on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page.

3. Here we may glimpse the significance of Hitchcock's comparison of a film to a piece of music or a short story, rather than a novel. He was referring to how we experience a film in one sitting. It has its own 'subjectivity', into which the generally rising curve of suspense locks us till the end. I see here an analogue of the working of 'Will' (see text), which Schopenhauer all but equated with music. Of Wagner's use of the effect called 'the suspension', Schopenhauer wrote that it was 'clearly an analogue of the satisfaction of the will which is enhanced through delay' ('The World as Will and Representation', Volume 2).

4. My analysis of *Spellbound* in 'MacGuffin' 15 sought to extend some excellent observations on that film made in 1986 by Andrew Britton in 'CineAction!'. The film is underrated (like much of Hitchcock's work, even now!). I seriously wonder whether the essay on *Spellbound* that is scheduled to appear in the 'MultiMedia Hitchcock' project will significantly reverse that situation. I hope it does. The chapter by Cohen in 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism' does not!

5. As Christopher Janaway, 'Schopenhauer' (1994), pp. 100-101, reports: 'In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [Schopenhauer] was at the forefront of European culture: his books were widely read, ... and were seized upon with enthusiasm by intellectuals and artists' (e.g. Thomas Hardy, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust). A typical recent essay discussing Schopenhauer's influence on Conrad has appeared on the World Wide Web: see Owen Knowles, "'Who's Afraid of Arthur Schopenhauer?': A New Context for Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'", at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu:8080/>, or use the link provided on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page!

6. Compare my analysis of the killing of Herr Gromek in *Torn Curtain* (1966), in 'MacGuffin' 8. Another precedent is perhaps the struggle of Guy with Bruno on the carousel in *Strangers on a Train* (1951) ...

7. Not for nothing did Hitchcock liken his manipulation of an audience's emotions to an organist playing his instrument. Note the further musical analogy. What I'm suggesting, of course, is that this instrument is nothing else but the Will in humans. See also note 18 below.

8. Even *Rear Window* (1954), for all its cheeriness at the end, manages to suggest that the seeds of likely further discord are already sown ...

9. H.R.F. Keating, 'Crime and Mystery: The 100 Best Books' (1987). p. 73.

10. H.R.F. Keating, "Crime Fiction: A History", in Martin Seymour-Smith (ed.), 'Novels and Novelists' (1980), p. 52.

11. I appreciate that Patricia Highsmith was, strictly speaking, an *American* writer (born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1921). Still, her books were always more appreciated in Europe, where she eventually settled (including some time in England).

Julian Symons thought her 'the writer who fuses character and plot most successfully ... the most important crime novelist at present in practice.'

12. In any case, Theodore Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992), handles the father-daughter theme better than Cohen. See my review of that book in 'MacGuffin' 12. Hitchcock's American films, from *Rebecca* (1940) to *Family Plot* (1976), were typically adapted from *English* novels and plays, of course.

13. In one respect, at least, I see Agatha Christie as sharing a quality in common with Hitchcock here. Like him, she could detach herself admirably from the prejudices of her time. In 1920, when she wrote her first novel, 'The Mysterious Affair at Styles', which is set during the War, and other writers like John Buchan and 'Sapper' were evincing much of the typical ani-Semitism of the period, her depiction of the character named Dr Bauerstein both allowed for and critiqued that prejudice. When the doctor proves to be a German spy, Hercule Poirot's not particularly bright offsider, Hastings, calls him a 'blackguard'. Poirot immediately corrects that notion: 'Not at all. He is, on the contrary, a patriot. Think what he stands to lose. I admire the man myself.' Hitchcock's depiction of Fisher (Herbert Marshall) in *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) leaps to mind, naturally.

14. About Dickens, Cohen conveniently fails to note how, though he could be the most robust and particularising of novelists - describing London's people and locales, for example - he was also very capable of seeing things in a detached and at times almost cosmic perspective. 'Bleak House' exemplifies all of this, I suggest. Notice also the passage from 'Our Mutual Friend' that I quote elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', at the beginning of my article on Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man*.

As for the notion, indeed the possibility, of a non-gendered 'life-force', I do seem to be offside even in raising it! So much are we all conditioned to think of sex roles as basic! Yet I persist in seeing that 'force' as something more than an abstraction. Indeed, about my only, as yet barely-formulated, criticism of Camille Paglia's brilliant book, 'Sexual Personae' (1991) is that it so closely follows Nietzsche in identifying 'life' with the Dionysian/chthonian, which is strangely taken to be invariably (and fundamentally) female. Yet that is surely a 'mythopoeic' understanding only (compare another reference to 'mythopoeic' in note 17 below) ...

15. I find Cohen's whole reduction of approaches to life and art, whereby inward-oriented = feminine, and outward-oriented = masculine, to be simplistic or at any rate unhelpful (as I say in the text). And not all prolix male authors, as Cohen appears to suggest, were necessarily 'feminine' (e.g. Scott, Thackeray), though some undoubtedly were (e.g. Henry James, Sir Hall Caine). By and large, that idea surely just reflects one more popular prejudice! Another point is this. It does seem to be true of English Romantic *poetry*, most of it written by men, that '[i]f the Romantics repress anything, it is masculinity' (Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae', p. 372). To me, that single statement throws more light on Hitchcock's Romanticised cinema, with its many 'perversities', than all of Cohen's circuitous theorising about the ambivalent relation of film to - specifically - the 19th-century *novel*. (Besides, many of Hitchcock's films, including *Sabotage*, were actually adapted from *plays*!) Again, the Romantic movement saw a positive fascination with the private lives of individuals, resulting in the adoption of *autobiography* as an introspective literary form by such (virile) writers as De Quincey, Lamb, and Hazlitt. At the same time, inner space was being further explored, by both men and women, using dream-analysis, drug-taking, and dabblings in the occult. These preoccupations continued right into Victorian times and beyond. So again I'd say that Cohen has over-simplified matters.

16. See Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Volume 1.

17. But even if it weren't - please note - what I am constantly describing when I draw certain parallels between Hitchcock and Schopenhauer is a *metaphysics* that I detect operating in Hitchcock's films. Such a metaphysics, though rather effusively and unsystematically stated, was long ago noted by writers on Hitchcock in 'Cahiers du Cinéma', like Douchet, Fieschi, and Rohmer and Chabrol - who tended to attribute it solely to Hitchcock's Catholicism. (That I find so much of Schopenhauer to be true - the world *is* very like what he says it is! - is largely beside the point here. Except, of course, that his clear-eyed understanding of things, at times defying orthodoxy, is something I often see in Hitchcock, too.)

There's an interview with Hitchcock, by Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg (in their book, 'The Celluloid Muse',1969) that I find salutary and enlightening. Hitchcock explains that he finally decided not to film Buchan's 'The Three Hostages' because he felt that the public wouldn't appreciate its central situation involving hypnotism: 'I don't believe people can feel or sense it. It's something outside their experience.' (The operative word here would appear to be 'outside'.) Yet in the next breath he discloses that he still hopes to film J.M. Barrie's fey and mystical 'Mary Rose': 'I regard that as almost a science fiction subject. I think it can be put over, not only as a sentimental Barrie story, but also as an illustration of the proposition - in which I believe - that a person can be atomically disembodied, made to disappear

and then be reassembled. I think there will come a time in the future when either we will be disembodied, taken apart by someone or be able to do it ourselves, and transfer ourselves that way to another place and come together there again.' (p. 103) This *isn't* exactly Schopenhauerian, of course - Schopenhauer held a rigorously 'mythopoeic' attitude to notions like reincarnation and the transmigration of souls - but the reasoned explanation from a basically 'materialist' position *is* ...

18. Suspense and sheer stagecraft are linked, and I think of a remark by Eric Bentley about what he calls 'the theatrical occasion'. 'There are directors in the New York theatre', he writes, 'who invite actors to pour out "love, *real* love" into the auditorium. The hope is that the audience will reciprocate. And it actually can respond with a warmth that has as good a claim to the word love as what the actor feels.' Bentley comments that the philosopher of such a 'ghostly' occasion is Luigi Pirandello - the 20th-century playwright (with Samuel Beckett) probably most influenced by Schopenhauer. (Bentley's remarks can be found in his very fine 'The Life of the Drama', 1965, p. 181.)

Well, I've remarked before on the erotic nature of suspense (in 'MacGuffin' 10, where I quoted Pascal Bonitzer's essay on that topic.) What I would now add is how all of this concerns simply one side of Will, whose other side is man's inhumanity to man. Though Schopenhauer emphasised that 'the genitals are the focus of the will' ('The World as Will and Representation', Volume 2), he further insisted on the truth of the expression *homo homini lupus* ('man is a wolf to man'), contending that it was in the nature of Will that one man must be 'the devil of another'. In 'MacGuffin' 8, I suggested how that (rather Hobbesian) theme operates in *Torn Curtain* ...

One last point I offer for exploration at another time. I suggest it's possible to see the 'closed' world depicted in *Rope* as analogous to the one created by a Romantic poet like Keats (1795-1821), which Hitchcock's film first indulges, then critiques. (I hold a similar understanding of the procedure of *Vertigo* concerning 'the transcendental pretence' - see 'MacGuffin' 8.) Camille Paglia concludes her chapter on Shelley and Keats by saying that in Keats's 'To Autumn', 'woman is unneeded, for she has been internalised by the poet, with his capacious ... imagination. The feminised male self becomes all-encompassing and self-sufficient. Keats's poems, opening the reader to nature, close off the poet in his own rigorous ritual precinct.' (Paglia, p. 388.) Only, if *Rope* also opens its audience to 'nature', that nature is to be seen as the very two-edged one I've characterised above as Will ...

19. 'The MacGuffin' has yet to analyse *Rope* in detail. Some preliminary remarks on it, including on the lamed Rupert's 'implication' in the murder, will be found in 'MacGuffin' 10, pp. 7-8. Cohen's analysis of the film rightly notes how we are often 'ahead' of Rupert in his investigations - which should only encourage us to be the more critical of his position. (However, Cohen's point is rather that 'we can be in no danger of succumbing to the imitative attitude of Brandon' - p. 93.)

20. In terms of subjective-technique, notice how once again, in entering into the film, we are effectively wearing Thornhill like one of his immaculately-tailored suits - only this one proves to have a hole in it!

21. In the book's Acknowledgments, Cohen thanks her sister 'whose critical spirit and humor have kept me honest'. There are several occasions in the book's text where you are conscious of just such a praiseworthy endeavour to be honest on Cohen's part.

22. Just as Schopenhauer thought of music as being very nearly pure, orchestrated Will, so Hitchcock's conception of 'pure film' often invoked an analogy with music. Compare notes 3 and 7 above.

OZ-REPORT

Budget blues

As we predicted, cultural and arts-related funding was cut quite savagely (see 'Oz-Report' in last issue) in the Liberal (conservative) federal government's first budget in August, although the film industry escaped relatively lightly, with most organisations getting no more than a 10% cut, and some activities actually receiving the same funding as before. But the film community is expecting the worst for next year; a global review of its funding is to commence soon. The idea is to eliminate any areas of duplication and overlap between organisations, and between federal and state funding. This could be serious; up until now, such funding has been seen as complementary rather than competitive. So, despite the fact that most people in the film community are convinced that the current mix of federal and state, and public and private, funding is working well, that the latest crop of films shows a welcome range of styles and diversity, and that Oz films are attracting expanding interest from US and European distributors, there is an atmosphere of resignation approaching gloom about the

future. At every change of government, both state and federal, incoming ministers seem determined to play around with the existing support mechanisms, no matter how they are performing.

Pleasures of the past

If there's gloom about the future, the past, at least, has been well served lately. To celebrate the centenary of cinema, the Museum of Contemporary Art earlier this year presented the eye-opening Dawn of Cinema screenings curated by Dr Barrett Hodsdon: ten programs of films made between 1895 and 1915 in the USA, France, England, Germany, Sweden, and Italy, including wonderful selections of the work of Méliès, Porter, and the early Griffith. Then, in August, the Dawn of Cinema Conference presented a packed program of papers and panel discussions which addressed issues to do with early films, pre-cinema, and the changing impressions of both as more research is done. The overseas guests - Professor Tom Gunning from the University of Chicago, Ian Christie, author of the fascinating Channel Four/British Film Institute TV series on early cinema, 'The Last Machine', Yuri Tsivian from Moscow en route to the University of Chicago, and Dr Andreas Rost from Munich - were all energetic and enthusiastic. A number of papers were given by local participants as well, proving that interesting and ground-breaking work is taking place here, and that the wealth of early Oz cinema has much to offer. Those attending the conference ranged from film and media students, film buffs and film society members to academics, bureaucrats and filmmakers, and the general opinion was that this was one of the most satisfying and enjoyable conferences for years.

A really BIG screen

October will see the opening of an Imax Theatre at Darling Harbour in Sydney. Those in the know claim that it will be the world's biggest, with a screen 30 metres high and 38 metres wide, and seating 540 people. (The screen for Melbourne's Imax, which opens next year, is said to be wider than Sydney's, but not as tall - so there's likely to be some argument between the two cities over whether height or width is more important!) That's to say, the screen is as high as an eight-story building. A restaurant and function centre adjoins, and a spectacular film of undersea exploration, *Into the Deep*, will be the opening attraction. The company behind the theatre, Cinema Plus, has launched a public share-offer to raise finance for its planned expansion into New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region, where it has the exclusive rights for erecting Imax screens.

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BLOOPERS

Apologies x 3 to Lary Kuhns. It isn't Lady Bracknell ('MacGuffin' 19, p. 5) in 'The Importance of Being Earnest' who has never seen a spade, but Gwendolen.

In Lary's letter about *The Wrong Man* ('MacGuffin' 19, p. 7), we managed to change the phrase 'true story' to 'true event'. Actually, we did this deliberately, for various and complicated reasons. But the short of it is that we were wrong.

Also, Lary has pointed out that in one of his letters and email messages to us concerning the stills from *The Mountain Eagle* held by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, he indicated that the stills form part of the collection of Hitchcock's personal papers, etc., donated by Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell. So we were wrong to say ('MacGuffin' 19, pp. 13-14) that 'it isn't exactly clear how the Academy came by the stills'.

* * *

In our 'Bloopers' last time (p. 21), as Adrian Martin has written to tell us, there were further bloopers! The director of *Fresh* is Boaz Yakin (not Yakim), and *Caro Diario/Dear Diary* is directed by Nanni (not Nano) Moretti. These errors were 'typos', which we regret.

Ditto, our spelling of the surname of that fine author and critic David Thomson ('A Biographical Dictionary of Film', etc.) as 'Thompson' ('MacGuffin' 19, p. 4).

On the same page 4, in the same letter (from the ubiquitous A. Martin), it was said that the Australian Film Institute library only holds the 1992 and 1993 editions of the 'Hitchcock Annual'. That's no longer the case, as the 1994 and 1995/6

editions have been on the library shelves since at least February. (Oh, and the official title of the AFI library is the AFI Research and Information Centre.)

The Man Who Knew Too Little: Alfred Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1957) compared with Charles Dickens's 'Bleak House' (1853)

The majority of men are subjective towards themselves and objective towards all others, terribly objective sometimes ...
- Sören Kierkegaard[1]

IN THE novel 'Our Mutual Friend' (1865), by Dickens, the principal character is thought to have drowned; for some time after that, he goes about London incognito. This gives him a peculiar sensation.[2] 'A spirit that was once a man', he says, 'could hardly feel stranger or lonelier, going unrecognised among mankind than I feel.' But soon he sees how 'this is the fanciful side of the situation'. His life has a 'real side', one which he determines to face. 'I know I evade it, as many men - perhaps most men - do evade thinking their way through their greatest perplexity. I will try to pin myself to mine ...'.

The above passage typifies the later Dickens, for it shows the author's imagination tempered by a new seriousness. Basically, of course, what we're being given is a ghost's-eye view. Years before, in 'A Christmas Carol' (1843), Dickens had used the device of a ghostly watcher to teach his character, Ebenezer Scrooge, a simple moral lesson: look, this is what people really think of you, and hadn't you better do something about it?[3] But in the major novels, like 'Bleak House' and 'Our Mutual Friend',[4] he now put the device to more sophisticated effect. One such effect was to make the people watched themselves seem like spirits - as if it took a ghost to see a ghost.

In turn, notice what that does. It helps turn the central Dickensian problem of an intractable self into a general phenomenon, one where *everybody* is all too visibly mortal. I'm necessarily playing on words here. By a 'problem of ... self', I mean both a simple physiological matter and a moral one, both matters stemming in Dickens from our imperfect human nature.[5] In the case of 'Our Mutual Friend', if not all the characters choose to confront their 'perplexity', even fewer of them prosper, and all will die; still, the novel hints at how, on a symbolic level, the waters of the Thames are at least potentially healing ...

Mind you, Dickens's London is often blighted from the start; in 'Our Mutual Friend', you have dust obscuring whole stretches of sky and landscape. Here Dickens's iconography resembles that of William Blake (1757-1827), whose poem 'London' refers to 'the chartered Thames' (originally 'the dirty Thames') and 'Every blackening church'.[6] Between them, these two writers helped fix a vision of a bleak metropolis which their successors would exploit with varying degrees of insight and types of effect. Most famously, you have T.S. Eliot's evocative description in 'The Waste Land' (1922):

> [redacted],
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
> I had not thought death had undone so many.
> Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
> And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

I'll return to that passage (with its echoes, in addition, of Baudelaire and Dante)[7] below.

Clearly indebted to Dickens's atmospheric novels, and soon to follow them, were the countless detective tales and 'thrillers' showing a city gripped by its notorious 'London particular' fog. The best of these included Joseph Conrad's 'The Secret Agent' (1907), Mrs Belloc Lowndes's 'The Lodger' (1913), Thomas Burke's 'The Hands of Mr Ottermole' (1931), and Margery Allingham's 'The Tiger in the Smoke' (1952). (The first two were destined to be filmed by Alfred Hitchcock, in 1936 and 1926 respectively.) Even American writers got into the act: typical stories were Richard Harding Davis's 'In the Fog' (1901), Earl Derr Biggers's 'Behind That Curtain' (1928), and Philip MacDonald's 'Warrant for X' (1938). The last-named was eventually filmed by Hollywood, in Eastmancolour and Cinemascope, as *Twenty-Three Paces to Baker Street* (1956).[8] Its title, of course, alludes - rather opportunistically - to the famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, who resided at 221B Baker Street, and whose exploits (along with the horrendous crimes of Jack the Ripper) have always been associated in the popular mind with foggy London and gaslight.

As for the cinema generally, it very early tapped into the same literary stream I've been describing. For example, *Broken Blossoms* (1919), directed by the legendary D.W. Griffith, took its story from another book by Thomas Burke, a collection called 'Limehouse Nights'. (Significantly, that story in turn seems to have appropriated its unredeemably brutal character known as 'Battling' Burrows from 'Our Mutual Friend' - whose 'Rogue' Riderhood is a scavenger in the Thames. Note the characteristic 'Dickensian' case of human nature failing to rehabilitate itself.) Under Griffith's direction, the story's riverside fogs were artfully realised, and the film's performers (Lillian Gish, Richard Barthelmess, Donald Crisp) all helped further establish a sense of ineluctable gloom.

Now, I want for convenience to call the convention, or motif, I've just outlined 'English expressionism' or 'English noir' (terms equally applicable to literary or visual media). Cockney film director Alfred Hitchcock was drawn to it early in his career, with his adaptation of 'The Lodger', sub-titled for the cinema 'A Story of the London Fog'. Four decades later, back in London from Hollywood, he virtually re-worked that story's 'Jack the Ripper' plot, in *Frenzy* (1972). But now his tone was ironic. The film begins on a topical note with views of a *cleaned-up* Thames. A snatch of Wordsworth's 'Prelude' ('Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive'), intoned by a glib politician, hints at the director's contrary leaning, i.e. to the more pessimistic Blake and Dickens.[8] Sure enough, next moment a body washes ashore! Soon we learn that London is in thrall to a Necktie Murderer, and that the city is 'littered' with the corpses of his/her victims ...

Frenzy is relatively lightweight Hitchcock and not, perhaps, one of its director's most satisfying films. But at the height of his career, in America, he'd made *The Wrong Man*. For much of its length, that film is a near-masterpiece. It's the true account of a man's wrongful arrest on charges of larceny, and his resulting fears for the loss of everything that constitutes his identity: his family, his job, his (and his wife's) sanity. Though the setting is New York City, Hitchcock would have seen straight away how the story's wintry images and downbeat theme could be inflected according to the 'English noir' model he knew so well (and which lately had been brought back to the screen in Henry Hathaway's *Twenty-Three Paces to Baker Street*). For, clearly, the parallels with a clammy and even 'ghostly' London were there waiting to be exploited, which is exactly what Hitchcock now set about doing. As the film turned out, even its structure followed major precedents. And though critics sometimes evoke, in this respect, Franz Kafka's 'The Trial' (1925),[9] I don't doubt that more numerous and more exact parallels are to be drawn with Dickens's 'Our Mutual Friend' and 'Bleak House', especially the latter. Hitchcock had studied both those novels at school.[10]

* * *

[Kierkegaard] is the only modern man who has so profound a sense of the solidarity of the race that original sin makes any sense to him.

- Walter Lowrie[11]

Let me be clear. Kafka himself had read 'Bleak House'[12] and in nearly every major respect I think it's the *Dickens* novel that underpins *The Wrong Man*. Now, there's a splendid study of Dickens, by Taylor Stoehr,[13] which argues that at the heart of that novelist's art exists a sense of wholeness restored, a by no means trivial 'dream' for the reader to savour and [redacted]into. Thus Stoehr's estimation of Dickens's intent differs hardly at all from film scholar Robin Wood's notion of there being a 'therapeutic' purpose to Hitchcock's films.[14] I want now to examine *The Wrong Man* as a 'Dickensian' text, starting with the film's opening scenes.

For a certain kind of imaginative artist, time and space are major raw materials to be worked. Such an artist is Hitchcock, who introduces himself at the start of *The Wrong Man*. A shadowy figure, he addresses us across an empty sound-stage ('This is Alfred Hitchcock speaking ...'); paradoxically, while he appears distant and diminutive, his voice seems close at hand, confiding. The effect is suggestive: it's as if we were being given privileged 'interior' information that transcends the space of its telling. Which, of course, having been recorded on film, it does. Significantly, Hitchcock distinguishes between the present film and his past work: what we're about to see 'is a true story, every word of it' Everything here, including the bare and deserted set, and a musical motif consisting of a few menacing notes plucked on a double-bass, contrives to suggest one of the essential ingredients of (literary or visual) expressionism: a man bringing himself to judgment in his own mind.[15] Yet, if Hitchcock quite literally puts himself at the centre of this first scene, that's not the end of the matter. The double-bass isn't only Hitchcock's instrument (which we saw him struggling to load on a railway car in *Strangers on a Train*, 1951), it's also that of the film's main character, whom we're about to meet. Moreover, the same expressionist stylisation that accompanies the film's start will envelop everything that follows right to the last shot.[16] In effect, we're being told that all the world's a sound-stage, and that Hitchcock is both master of ceremonies and, like us, just one more participant.

The film cuts to New York's famous Stork Club, where musician Christopher Emmanuel ('Manny') Balestrero plays in the Latin band. Another master of ceremonies presides here: on the right of screen hovers the Club's maitre d'hotel.[17] Likewise, there's another double-bass, which we both hear and see being played by Manny (Henry Fonda). But also, there's again a sense of dislocation. Belying the generally festive connotations (note the patrons dining and dancing under bunches of balloons; and the band's rumba accompaniment), what the sequence shows via a series of near-invisible dissolves is these people seemingly being *spirited* away. This 'Dickensian' effect provides at once a foretaste of others to come and a link to the deserted sound-stage of before. Equally, because the dissolves condense an evening's festivities into a few seconds of screen-time, the sequence is a correlative of the first: instead of space being primarily what is transcended, here it's time. As critic William Pechter felt, the effect is positively eerie - and much facilitated by composer Bernard Herrmann's reedy modulations of the rumba score.[18]

The foreshadowings multiply. Even the distinctive lettering of the film's credits, which overlie this sequence, will be echoed later when Manny and his wife, Rose (Vera Miles), visit the office of the attorney, Mr O'Connor (Anthony Quayle). That is, you can see the same style of lettering spelling out the words 'Law Offices' on the window behind O'Connor's desk. Such cosy 'closure' *may* be comforting, but it also suggests entrapment in someone else's nightmare - presaging, in this case, the attorney's inept defence of Manny in court. Again, during the credits sequence, Manny's band is heard by the film's audience playing *continuously*: there are no sound-dissolves to match the visual dissolves. The effect is one of a 'wholeness' being found in - or imposed on - flux, and thus may or may not reflect a certain wilful blindness on the part of Manny and his fellow musicians.[19] Both aspects of this ambiguous effect anticipate issues in the film. But, crucially, their near-paradox (prompting the question: who, if anyone, is in control here?), which exactly matches the vein of Hitchcock's introduction, again manages to implicate *us*.

When Manny leaves the Stork Club in the early hours of the morning, the camera frames him in such a way that he appears to have been taken into custody by two passing foot patrolmen. Of course, he's oblivious of this; that is, he doesn't (yet?) see himself through an outsider's eyes, in relatively objective terms. Also, though he soon *descends* to his customary subway station and boards his usual train,[20] after a station or two he *ascends* again: the film is telling us that he's innocent of the trauma ahead. Then he'll be plunged, like a Dickens character, into very murky depths indeed, where he too will struggle for his life. And so on. These opening scenes constitute one *long* foreshadowing - and thus, given the protracted nature of everything that follows, a kind of *meta*-foreshadowing.

Let's run the film forward to the point of Manny's actual arrest. Here begins a key sequence in which he's taken by local detectives, after initial interrogation, to visit the places he's alleged to have robbed. Much of the area, in downtown Queens, is familiar to him. As the police car starts out with him inside, through a window he can see Rose waiting for him in the house, unaware of anything wrong. Wherever he looks, people are going about their usual business. But soon we notice something else about these passers-by with their pinched faces in the wintry streets. Typically their faces show the 'Marks of [human] weakness, marks of woe' evoked by Blake's 'London' (compare Dickens's vast gallery of 'grotesques'). Still, I don't agree with critic Donald Spoto that there's anything 'suspicious' about them:[21] basically such faces express just a preoccupation and busy-ness that are common enough. And, yes, mortal: caught in car headlights, people hurrying across the road look like wraiths. This scene's 'ghostly onlooker' effect anticipates aspects of Hitchcock's next two films, i.e. both *Vertigo* (adapted from a French novel called 'D'entre les Morts'/'Among the Dead') and *North by Northwest* (whose eerie credits-sequence itself owes much to the passage from 'The Waste Land' I quoted above).[22]

* * *

The bourgeois mind is really the inability to rise above the absolute reality of time and space, and as such is therefore able to devote itself to the highest objects, e.g., prayer, [only] at certain times and with certain words.
- Sören Kierkegaard[23]

Manny's nickname tells us that he's just an average fellow, a capable musician liked by his colleagues but no genius like the immortal Mozart - whom both of Manny's boys, aged 8 and 5, say they want to emulate. An Italian Catholic, he puts his faith in God and lives his life accordingly. Early in the film (notably, in the few moments I skipped over before), Hitchcock goes to great lengths to establish the Balestrero family's ordinariness. At the same time, we're made aware that death-in-life (a Hitchcock theme since *Blackmail*, 1929)[24] is already prowling ...

Arriving home from work in the early morning, Manny closes the front door - which the tracking camera 'miraculously' penetrates. Here, and again later, both the camera and the ubiquitous double-bass refuse to be kept out. In an important sense, they again assert the wholeness, the bigger picture, that Hitchcock's film is about, and which Manny never seems to grasp. (If he did, he might have less need of miracles - something for which he and members of his family later pray: see below.)[25] But in another important sense, it's death itself which enters Manny's home. This particular morning, in a reprise of the mournful oboe and double-bass motif from the pre-credits sequence, the latter instrument, especially, sounds

as if it were stalking Manny down the hall.[26] The motif functions like Albinoni's/Giazotto's famous 'Adagio'[27] in both Orson Welles's *The Trial* (1962) and Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981) to suggest fatality: in all three cases, the double-bass is singularly expressive. At the same time, Hitchcock is here establishing a context that will serve to mock later attempts by the Balestrero family to deny reality, as when Rose wants to lock all the doors and turn people away.

Inside the house, it's still dark and the two boys are asleep. But in the main bedroom Rose is lying awake and is anxious to talk to her husband. She's been suffering from impacted wisdom teeth, something her dentist explained in a 'little lecture' he gave her 'on evolution'. As Rose puts it: 'Seems the human race is growing smaller jaws and having fewer teeth, but the teeth are ahead of the jaws ...', i.e. everything moves so slowly. It's not the only such lecture we hear, or hear about, in the film. After Manny's drawn-out day in court ends in a mis-trial, and a new trial is ordered, the judge sententiously tells the jurors about the American system of justice, which has *evolved* from the famous Code of Hammurabi. 'In Babylonian days ... .' Against the sort of time-scale evoked by these references, that of Manny's and Rose's lives is modest indeed: for example, they have enough problems making month-by-month repayments of money they've borrowed on the instalment plan. The scene in the bedroom ends when Rose says she sometimes feels frightened at night as she waits for Manny's return, and a small bedside clock chimes the hour.

That tinkling sound - so puny compared to the film's omnipresent roar of trains - confirms the various messages we've been getting. The outer world whirls around the immediate, and fragile, domestic world, threatening to crush it. Thus, Manny can comfort Rose by saying without apparent complacency, 'We're in love, we've got two good bright boys, I've got a job I like ... .' Nonetheless, their sense of what constitutes reality (which philosophers would define in terms of a time-space-causality nexus)[28] is not only ordinary, it's blatantly utilitarian and 'bourgeois', i.e. both routine and circumspect. When, next afternoon, Manny joins his sons beside the piano (note the metronome on top), it isn't surprising to hear him offer this piece of homespun advice: 'You mustn't let anything throw you off the beat ... .'

* * *

The opposite of the bourgeois mentality is really the Quaker religion (in its abstract significance), where it includes the uncertainty and chance which is found in the life of so many; altogether it is an annihilation of the historical process.
- Sören Kierkegaard[29]

What now happens to Manny plays itself out like a nightmare against a backdrop we've already noted: specifically, New York in the winter of 1952-53.[30] In this nightmare, human need finds itself cut off, as if by a time/space warp,[31] from a support which had always seemed available; now, other people come and go, but they appear preoccupied or unheeding. In short, the atmosphere resembles that of 'Bleak House', whose famous opening includes the following passage:

> *Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill ... Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, ... adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.*

The foggy weather that, one imagines, is implied in the very title of 'Bleak House' is richly symbolic, the equivalent of the dust in 'Our Mutual Friend'. That is, the 'problem of self' is evoked on a national, indeed universal, scale - though it's most artfully realised in the localised descriptions of London and its inhabitants, as in this passage. Notably, the passage hints at various forms of combativeness and greed, and the slow if not totally failed role of evolution in ending human imperfection. Also, it foreshadows the lumbering lawsuit that will take centre-stage in the story and affect many lives, several of them terminally.

Other imagery here is 'generic' in the sense that it recurs as a set of parallels in *The Wrong Man*: for example, the tenaciously clinging mud (compare the film's memorable close-up of Manny's soiled hands after his fingerprinting), the ill-tempered pedestrians losing their foothold (compare Manny's injunction to his quarrelling sons not to lose 'the beat'), the implicit contribution made to the 'general infection' by commerce with its 'deposits ... accumulating at compound interest' (compare Manny and Rose's struggle to pay back money they've borrowed on the instalment plan). As I've said, the parallels to be drawn between Hitchcock's film and Dickens's novel are more exact, as well as more numerous, than can validly be drawn between the film and Kafka's 'The Trial'.[32]

Indeed, it's scarcely forcing matters to add that in *The Wrong Man* there are *several* 'bleak houses': the precinct station (with its pitted concrete walls), the cheerless tenements visited by Manny and Rose during their search for witnesses to

establish Manny with an alibi, the sanatorium (to which Rose is committed late in the film), the Balestrero house itself (after Rose's departure from it). The early hints of mortality and coming tribulation are just that, no more than hints. But soon they are confirmed, as when Manny and Rose go looking for the witnesses I mentioned and find that the persons concerned have all either died or moved away without trace. Seeking these people, Manny and Rose visit parts of the city they're clearly not familiar with; in the same way, characters in 'Bleak House' visit little-known parts of London (for example, the foul slum called Tom-all-Alone's). Manny and Rose even travel out of the city to an upstate holiday resort where, the previous summer, they had spent happier times; now the resort is under snow and as much in the grip of winter as the city itself - a parallel to how in 'Bleak House' there's little to choose between muddy London and drizzly 'Chesney Wold' in Lincolnshire.[33]

Also, in both works hopes are constantly being quickened, then dashed. Manny strides purposefully across the snow at the resort but achieves nothing definite. Back in the city, he and Rose visit a tenement block and hear animated sounds in the apartment they're seeking, but the giggling young girls who answer the door can't help them. (The two girls, whose parents aren't at home, mirror Manny and Rose's two boys - who at this moment are also home alone.) Even Manny's trial begins for him with some hope that the truth will quickly come to light, for he would seem to have one (at any rate) excellent alibi, from his dentist, who can testify that his face was visibly swollen on one of the robbery dates; but the proceedings end in anti-climax. In all these instances, you could be reminded of a passage from Chapter 2 of 'Bleak House' (and an excellent analysis of the passage by Professor C.B. Cox):

> *My Lady Dedlock (who is childless), looking out in the early twilight from her boudoir [at Chesney Wold] at a keeper's lodge, and seeing the light of a fire upon the latticed panes, ... and a child, chased by a woman, running out in the rain to meet the shining figure of a wrapped-up man coming through the gate, has been put quite out of temper. My Lady Dedlock says she has been 'bored to death'.*

As Professor Cox shows, the effect here depends on the sudden contrast between the generally damp and deathly scene (there's even a paved terrace at Chesney Wold called 'the Ghost's Walk') and the warmth and darting movement across the way.[34] Let's note, too, the continuity with other parts of the novel: for example, with the ill-temper of the Londoners in Chapter 1. By such 'noirish' means, both 'Bleak House' and *The Wrong Man* characterise their particular closed worlds, to immense cumulative effect.

Again, at times people and events in *The Wrong Man* seem to have an underwater quality about them, as if we were seeing them exhibited in an aquarium. When Manny is arrested and locked up overnight, in effect he nearly drowns. As the camera begins to whirl around him in his cell, Bernard Herrmann's *most* 'underwater' music (for harp, strings, muted brass and *stifled* woodwinds) echoes the suggestion of a vortex. For a while afterwards, Manny finds that his whole conception of time and space, and of values, has shifted. Released on bail, he tells his wife and his in-laws, who put up the money, 'I'll never forget this, never.' To Rose, he hints at the ineffable, telling her, 'Oh honey, you'll never know how much I needed you.' Perhaps most significantly of all, as he pauses on their doorstep where just the previous day the police had accosted him, he says it feels like it happened 'about a million years ago'.

* * *

Even if, juristically speaking, we were not accessories to the crime, we are always, thanks to our huma nature, potential criminals. In reality we merely lacked a suitable opportunity to be drawn into the infernal melée. None of us stands outside humanity's black collective shadow. Whether the crime lies many generations back or happens today, it remains the symptom of a disposition that is always and everywhere present ...

- C.G. Jung (1957)[35]

Sadly, Manny doesn't fully, or lastingly, incorporate the insights his ordeal has offered him. His 'bourgeois' outlook remains essentially unaltered, confined in spite of everything to his particular time and place.[36] As we'll see, he fails a crucial test. Even so, Hitchcock's compassion, especially for a fellow Catholic, allows a final ambiguity ...

Hitchcock called his film's dénouement merely an 'ironic coincidence', but nonetheless one he 'liked'.[37] As Manny prays to a religious picture, the real holdup man materialises onscreen, to be caught soon afterwards. Here, I think even a viewer who is a non-believer feels a frisson. For a start, the materialisation of the real criminal *reverses* a trend: recall the 'dissolving' Stork Club patrons, the dead or vanished witnesses, Rose's breakdown. Manny himself has lately seemed headed the same way, having just told his mother (Esther Minciotti), 'You'd all be better off without me'. (Note: *dematerialisation* is also very much a motif of 'Bleak House', as epitomised most dramatically in the death of a character by 'spontaneous combustion'.)

Further, the way in which the film's dénouement is constructed and played suggests in fact a new wholeness and integration. This time, our sense of that wholeness has less to do with a feat performed by Hitchcock's camera, and more to do with 'an act of God' which the film dutifully presents. After Manny's despairing remark to his mother, quoted above, she tells him to pray for strength. What we then see is a succession of four 'heads': that of Manny's mother (who prays in an adjoining room), that of the Christ-image in the religious picture, that of Manny, and (after a single most *emphatic* dissolve) that of the real criminal who will be caught as he tries to rob a delicatessen. This visual 'chain effect' shows us a continuity not yet known to Manny, though he may infer it later. What he may never fully infer are all the other continuities, i.e. 'ironic coincidences', that have led up to it.

The crucial such coincidence isn't just that Manny has a 'double' but also that the latter operates in Manny's neighbourhood and holds up the insurance office where the Balestrero family have accounts. (Later, it even turns out that Manny and his double print alike and make an identical spelling mistake.) Actually, the film contains *several* near-doubles of Manny and the real criminal, some more 'alike' than others: Manny brushes against one of them - probably the real criminal - on the fateful afternoon he visits the insurance office to arrange a loan on Rose's policy.[38]

Again, Manny lives in Jackson Heights, in Queens,[39] which happens to be where the attorney Mr O'Connor also lives. Yet Mr O'Connor's office is located in the Victor Moore Arcade Building, some kilometres away, just up the passageway from the insurance office. This, in a city the size of New York! Once more you may think of Dickens, of whom his friend and biographer John Forster wrote:

> *On the coincidences, resemblances and surprises of life Dickens liked especially to dwell, and few things moved his fancy so pleasantly. The world, he would say, was so much smaller than we thought it; we were all so connected by fate without knowing it and people supposed to be far apart were so constantly elbowing each other; and tomorrow bore so close a resemblance to nothing half so much as yesterday.*[40]

That's indeed the stuff of both 'Bleak House' and *The Wrong Man*. In Manny's case, he glimpses a state of heightened awareness that might embrace it (compare his 'million years' remark, and his new knowledge of the city), but even that insight dissolves like most everything else in the film. In fact, the arrest of the real criminal seems only to cause Manny more setbacks in the here-and-now:

(1) As I've indicated, the first of these setbacks is crucial: a test which he fails. When the two men come face to face at the precinct station, Manny's response is to *assume* the other's absolute guilt, as various people had earlier assumed his own. Manny shows no magnanimity. But, reverting to old form, nor does he show understanding. 'Do you realise what you've done to my wife?' he asks, peevishly. Which is no doubt human of him, and true-to-life, but also self-alienating in a Jungian sense. And what of this *other* man's wife and family, mentioned in the dialogue earlier? In particular, what is now going to happen to *them*?

(2) With grim 'poetic justice', Manny himself encounters non-understanding when he tries to explain the turn of events to Rose. As in 'Bleak House', when the seemingly interminable lawsuit ends but leaves behind a trail of devastation and madness,[41] so Hitchcock's film contains its own victims. Notably, there's Rose. Blaming her impacted wisdom teeth and her inadequate housekeeping for what has happened, i.e. employing the same immured thinking to which Manny is given, she retreats still further, into catatonia. When Manny comes to the sanatorium to tell her he's been cleared, she only murmurs, 'That's fine for you'. Here, what looks like one more variant on Dickens's 'problem of self'[42] declares itself, with no immediate solution in sight. Manny admits to a nurse that he'd been 'hoping for a miracle', and mentions how his sons pray each night for their mother's recovery. The nurse smiles. Miracles happen, she says, 'but they take time'. (Nobody in the film acknowledges its earlier 'miracle', when prayer *had* seemingly been efficacious.)

A final title, placed over a long-shot of a family strolling down a Florida street, tells us that after two years Rose left the sanatorium, 'completely cured'. (Likewise, in 'Bleak House', its heroine returns to the actual, henceforth ironically-named, Bleak House, in Hertfordshire, where she marries the young surgeon who loves her, and who is newly-returned from overseas.)[43] This seems in keeping with certain fantasies of Manny's, for early in the film we'd seen him studying the form-guide and race-results for Hialeah racecourse, in Miami. Yet now a last, plummeting chord sounds a disquieting undertone. The essential Hitchcockian ambiguity remains.[44] The ordeal of one man and his family may be over, but the deeper-lying problem remains unsolved. And though a possible answer may occasionally be glimpsed beyond what I've called the philosophers' time-space-causality nexus, who among us can really expect to do better than Manny and penetrate to that awesome region of the 'thing-in-itself'?[45]

* * *

The perfect has no need of the other, but weakness has, for it seeks support and does not confront its partner with anything that might force him into an inferior position and even humiliate him. This humiliation may happen only too easily when idealism plays too prominent a role.

- C.G. Jung[46]

To cite such a (perhaps) God-like entity as Kant's thing-in-itself is to raise the question: should any of us even *want* to presume knowledge of it?[47] At any rate, that's a theme whose fullest exploration in Hitchcock occurs in his very next film, *Vertigo*. You might call the theme the 'tragic pursuit of perfection'. In *Vertigo*, the highly intelligent, unmarried policeman called Scottie, confronted by proof of his own mortality and weakness, thereafter seeks to escape from the mundane world - with tragic results. By contrast, the average family-man Manny in *The Wrong Man* seems positively rooted in the mundane world, and eschews a sense of the (Nietzschean) tragic altogether. In each case, though, the viewer is left feeling that the character has missed out on something.

Indeed, I think it's possible to feel an ambivalence, similar to the one I've just implied, informing some key sequences of *The Wrong Man*. For instance, after Manny's initial court hearing, he's taken back to prison, pending bail. Throughout the journey, he's handcuffed to another prisoner. Hitchcock strongly empathises with Manny in his humiliation here, apparently basing the sequence both on the real Christopher Balestrero's ordeal and on the recent arrest and trial for murder of respected Ohio physician Dr Samuel Sheppard.[48] The sequence is filmed subjectively, i.e. showing only those things of which Manny himself is directly conscious. As Hitchcock explained: 'since he's ashamed, he keeps his head down staring at his shoes, so we never show the guards ... only [their] feet, their lower legs, the floor, and the bottom parts of the doors'.[49] But despite thus entering so closely into Manny's situation, the sequence also provides one more evocation of the passage I quoted earlier from 'The Waste Land', which in turn sees fit to liken its commuters crossing London Bridge to the legions of the damned in Dante's 'Inferno' ...[50]

Now, a coda. For the element of nightmare in *The Wrong Man*, there's one more real-life precedent - an English one this time - of which Hitchcock was undoubtedly aware.[51] I'm thinking of what is still probably the world's most famous case of mistaken identity, that of an Alfred Beck. In 1896, Beck was arrested in a London street on the say-so evidence of a woman who claimed he'd once swindled her of money and jewellery. On being 'identified' by several witnesses, including two policemen, he was found guilty and spent five years in prison. Three years later, in practically identical circumstances, he was arrested again! Once more he was found guilty. But this time he was awaiting sentence when police on the case learned of the arrest of another man who had been using a familiar-sounding technique. One of the police visited the man and immediately saw his resemblance to Beck. It turned out that this man had committed *all* the swindles.

Thus the Beck case probably gave Hitchcock the idea he used in *The Wrong Man* of showing a detective's sudden chance realisation of Manny's innocence: a scene near the end of the film which effectively completes the earlier 'four heads' sequence. Here the close-up of the detective provides a fifth 'head'. Need I add how this further ambiguous emphasis on the working of fate fits the film's constant evocation of our everyday world, one in which both mundane *and* extraordinary forces operate largely unseen?

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Notes

1. Quoted in W.H. Auden (ed.), 'The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard' (1963), p. 25. The present article will refer to works by Charles Dickens and Franz Kafka - both of whom have given scholars occasion to cite the great Danish thinker (1813-55) called 'the father of existentialism'. See, in particular, Ada Nisbet, "Charles Dickens", passim, in Lionel Stevenson (ed.), 'Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research' (1964); and Jean Wahl, "Kierkegaard and Kafka", passim, in Angel Flores (ed.), 'The Kafka Problem' (1946). As for Alfred Hitchcock, I've found Kierkegaard particularly illuminating of his films *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) and *The Wrong Man* - though I only discuss the latter film here.

2. The passage from 'Our Mutual Friend' quoted and discussed here comes in Book the Second, Chapter XIII.

3. A similar device, put to similar purpose, is used in the Frank Capra film, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), starring James Stewart. Curiously, that film has gained in America a huge popular following, associated particularly with Christmas, very like the following Dickens's tale enjoyed with the British public of its day, and afterwards.

4. 'Our Mutual Friend' was Dickens's last complete novel. It has been called 'one of his densest and most comprehensive accounts of contemporary society, as well as perhaps his bleakest'.See Ian Ousby (ed.), 'The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English' (1994), p. 696.

5. A play on words roughly parallel to mine is used by Kenneth Burke in 'The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action' (1957), p. 249, where he calls role in drama 'salvation via change or purification of identity (purification in either the moral or chemical sense)'. Quoted by Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson' (Penguin Books edition, 1991), p. 198. This sort of duplex meaning is, I think, characteristic of works by both Dickens and Hitchcock - and is very 'cinematic'.

6. The version 'dirty Thames' occurs in the so-called Rossetti manuscript, Blake's notebook in which he wrote his first drafts of 'The Songs of Experience' and associated poems. Whether Dickens actually read Blake is uncertain: all that Dr F.R. Leavis will venture to say (in a chapter called "Dickens and Blake: 'Little Dorrit"') is that [redacted] question is that [Dickens] was familiar with Wordsworth and with Romantic poetry in general ...'. See F.R. Leavis and Q.D. Leavis, 'Dickens the Novelist' (1970), p. 228. Also of relevance here are some of Camille Paglia's comments on Blake. She writes: 'Blake prefigures Baudelaire and Kafka in his vision of the dead night-world of the modern city, today an arid grid of glass and concrete.' See Paglia, op. cit., p. 279. Her book, which has perceptive things to say on both Dickens and Hitchcock, might have cited those two artists, too, in the context of her remarks on Blake. Compare notes 7 and 22 below.

7. Eliot's own 'Notes on "The Waste Land"' points out the echoes of Baudelaire, and Dante's 'Inferno', contained in these lines. The Baudelaire passage reads: 'Fourmillante cité pleine de rêves,/ Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.' Further, I suspect that Eliot is here mocking, consciously or unconsciously, Wordsworth's paean to London in 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' (1802), which begins, 'Earth has not anything to show more fair ...'. Compare notes 8 and 22 below.

Cf Frenzy

8. Hitchcock's own mocking of Wordsworth (not without irony, for it's clear he always felt a degree of affection for his home city) is in keeping with other passages in his films that seem to take their inspiration from T.S. Eliot. Again compare note 22 below.

9. See, for example, Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures' (1992), p. 261.

10. See Donald Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock: The Dark Side of Genius' (1983), p. 28 and p. 422. Spoto notes on p. 28 that 'particular attention was paid [at Hitchcock's school] to "Bleak House", a novel that seems to have engraved itself on Hitchcock's memory'. The excellent pioneering article on Dickens and Hitchcock is Edward Buscombe's "Dickens and Hitchcock", in 'Screen', Volume 11, Issue 4-5 (July-October, 1970), pp. 97-114. One of Buscombe's main points concerns the notion of a 'desecrated Eden' in both artists' work.

11. W. Lowrie, "Introduction", in Sören Kierkegaard, 'The Concept of Dread' (1944), p. xi.

12. See Mark Spilka, 'Dickens and Kafka' (1963), which contains, inter alia, a comparison of 'Bleak House' and 'The Trial'. Also, it's interesting to note Geoffrey Thurley's remark, in 'The Dickens Myth: Its Genesis and Structure' (1976), p. 189, that in a final analysis the lawsuit in 'Bleak House', 'and Chancery itself, [may] have a transcendent identity, their malignancy being projected onto them by the suitors. (This at any rate is what Kafka made of the novel.)' Compare note 32 below.

13. T. Stoehr, 'Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance' (1965), passim.

14. In the third edition (1977) of his 'Hitchcock's Films', Wood wrote: 'I still feel that the Hitchcock films I most admire are centred on a movement towards health via therapy and catharsis' (p. 20).

15. I owe this definition to Dr Margery Morgan, who gave it in a lecture she delivered at Monash University, Melbourne, on aspects of German Expressionism. (Compare note 35 below.) Philip Kemp has pointed out to me that G.W. Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul* (1926) treats such a theme, and must be one of the earliest (and most expressionistic) of films to do so. Still, I detect at least elements of the theme in Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919).

16. The film's *penultimate* shot shows a corridor in a sanatorium, where back-lighting duplicates that of the first scene. The *final* image is of a Florida street, ostensibly signifying 'release'. But even here, converging footpaths form a wedge-shape which repeats the typical expressionist 'need to bring yourself to judgment' motif. Also, as I'll note in the text, there's an alarming chord on the soundtrack at this point ... As for the idea, mentioned in the text, of how all the world's a sound-stage, Philip Kemp points out that Hitchcock would certainly have seen Max Ophuls's *La Ronde* (1950),

which also begins in such a manner. Anton Walbrook in that film is, as Philip Kemp says, at his most smoothly urbane as the master-of-ceremonies/participant.

17. Hitchcock often liked to carry over a motif from the credits-sequence of a film into the main action: for example, sliding horizontal lines in the credits of *Psycho* (1960) are later echoed visually by a line of type on the sliding glass door to Mr Lowery's inner office ...

18. Pechter's article, called "Hitchcock in Retrospect" - one of several at times perceptive pieces Pechter wrote on the director - appeared in 'Commentary', November 1976, pp. 75-78. In contrast to it, an article by Marshall Deutelbaum, "Finding the Right Man in *The Wrong Man*" (printed in M. Deutelbaum and L. Poague, 'A Hitchcock Reader', 1986), is often either beside-the-point or wrong, as when it says that 'the lap dissolves [in this sequence] function in a purely conventional manner'.

19. This represents an instance of Hitchcockian ambiguity, one which typically shows the director taking advantage of the non-specific nature of film story-telling: compare my point about 'duplex meaning' in note 5 above. Here,the question is: are Manny and his fellow musicians to be seen as heroic for their 'conquering' of flux (however briefly), or as guilty of not submitting themselves to its essential flow? Of course, how you answer that may depend on whether you hold a 'Western' or an 'Eastern' outlook. (Or, perhaps, on whether you prefer to attempt an even more philosophical or 'detached' position, approaching that of the great Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860. It's the latter position which I suspect corresponds closely to that of Hitchcock, the universal filmmaker.)

20. Both the subway station and the train are practically deserted, with the same 'man needing to look at himself' connotation as before.

21. Spoto makes this claim in the first edition (1979) of his 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock', p. 288. It's missing from the revised (1992) edition ...

22. An essay might be written about the credits-sequence of *North by Northwest* (1959). An initial 'ghostly' green, itself a carry-over from *Vertigo*, dissolves to a dusty-red-brown view of a glass office-block (the newly-erected Seagram Building) which *eerily* reflects home-bound New Yorkers swarming into the streets and subways below. It's almost inconceivable that Hitchcock wasn't thinking here of T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land', and specifically its lines evoking an 'Unreal City' swarming with the living dead. (Professor John Carey, 'The Intellectuals and the Masses', 1992, p. 10, has shown how it was largely through Eliot's influence that, by the 1930s, the Nietzschean assumption that most people are dead had become 'a standard item in the repertoire of any self-respecting intellectual'.) In view of the many poetry references I keep attributing to Hitchcock, in the present article and elsewhere, it's worth noting that he was a friend of Professor C. Day-Lewis, the English Poet Laureate (1968-72), who wrote crime fiction under the surely significant pseudonym, 'Nicholas Blake'. For confirmation of that friendship, see David Castell, "Such Interesting People ...", in D. Castell (ed.), 'Cinema '76' (1975), p. 126. See also note 50 below, and the main text at that point (re possible allusions to Dante in the credits of both *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*).

23. Quoted in Auden, op. cit., p. 37.

24. When Hitchcock was preparing to film *The Lodger*, he may have noticed then how Mrs Belloc Lowndes's novel climaxes at the top of a great staircase inside Madame Tussaud's waxworks in London (Chapter XXVI). The 'curious, still, waxen figures' suggest to the startled Lodger 'death in life' - much as Egyptian statues and mummies inside the British Museum startle the characters at the climax of *Blackmail*. Certainly it was an idea that came to haunt Hitchcock, for he later filmed variants of it in the climaxes of *Saboteur* (1942) and *North by Northwest*.

25. In Professor Stanley Cavell's 'Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage' (1981), he cites Ibsen's 'A Doll House' (1879) as a paradigm-case of where a couple's marriage might only be successfully reconstituted if 'a miracle of change' were to occur (p. 23). I think that, deep down, there's a similar circumstance prevailing in *The Wrong Man*. Compare notes 42-44 below.

26. Some time after I originally wrote this, in 1992, I read Steven C. Smith's 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann' (1991). On p. 211, Smith notes how pleased the composer of *The Wrong Man*'s score had been to come across a 1957 review from Australia (of all places) which spoke of how the film's 'gaunt sound-track ... is a series of plucked low notes from the musician's own double-bass, always in a rhythm to suggest footfalls of a ghost ...'. (The exact source of the review isn't given but may be the estimable 'Film Journal', sadly long vanished.) Smith gives the further information (p. 189) that Herrmann had recently worked on a musical production for television of Dickens's 'A

Christmas Carol', with lyrics by playwright Maxwell Anderson - who would be hired by Hitchcock to write the scenario of *The Wrong Man*.

27. The popular 'Adagio', often ascribed to Tomaso Albinoni (1671-1751), was actually composed by his biographer, Remo Giazotto (1910-). Or so I have lately read. See 'The Wordsworth Dictionary of Biography' (1994), p. 7.

28. Hugo Münsterberg, an early film theoretician, anticipated an aspect of *The Wrong Man* when he wrote in 1916: 'The photoplay tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination and emotion.' (Quoted in S.S. Prawer, 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror', 1980, p. 209.) Rreaders may like to compare Münsterberg's observation to one by Bryan Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 125: 'In inner sense I have direct knowledge of a great many things besides my acts of will - feelings, emotions, moods, all sorts of things - and when what we are considering is the inner knowledge we have of ourselves all these will have to be taken into account. But acts of will ... are the sole examples of empirically observed movements of physical objects in space and time which are also ... known simultaneously and directly from within in a way which is not mediated through the senses.' I think it is part of Hitchcock's genius, expressed through his characteristic ambiguity (compare in particular note 19 above), to recognise the equal status of inner *and* outer reality. The critique of the Balestrero family offered by *The Wrong Man* gains its simultaneous weight and quality of empathy from such a position - which I would indeed call 'Schopenhauerian'.

29. Quoted in Auden, op. cit., p. 37.

30. Hitchcock's film is based, via a treatment by Maxwell Anderson and Angus MacPhail, on Herbert Brean's "A Case of Identity" which appeared in 'Life', 29 June, 1953. Brean's article deserves to be anthologised one of these days for its fine reportage and its intrinsic interest.

31. Inter alia, I'm thinking of parts of H.G. Wells's 'The Time Machine' (1895) - but also of moments in some stories by Jules Verne, such as 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea' (1870)! (On an 'underwater' nuance in *The Wrong Man*, see main text.) Equally, compare the passage from 'Our Mutual Friend' I quoted at the start of the present article.

32. Still, I leave open the matter raised by Mark Spilka of the difference between Dickens's and Kafka's basic religious assumptions. For Dickens, says Spilka, op. cit., the unjust social order shown in 'Bleak House' has been generated in part by a false notion of people's natural sinfulness. The fog clinging to the Court of Chancery would disappear if society would accept the fact that God is beneficent, and people naturally good. (I think Professor Lesley Brill holds a roughly comparable view of *Hitchcock*. See his 'The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films', 1988.) Kafka, on the other hand, accepts the notion of a distant, inscrutable God, apparently unjust, who condemns all of us to a state of 'sinful innocence'. (This is perhaps closer to my own, 'Schopenhauerian' understanding of a notion held by Hitchcock the filmmaker.)

33. The novel's actual Bleak House is in Hertfordshire. See Chapter 3. (What's potentially confusing about this is that Dickens based the house on one he knew at Broadstairs, in Kent. See photograph in J.B. Priestley, 'Charles Dickens: A Pictorial Biography', 1961, p. 82.) It comes to seem ironically named, inasmuch as the weather there is relatively well-disposed, and for other reasons. I see a parallel case in the references in *The Wrong Man* to Florida, something I discuss later in the present article.

34. Professor Cox's "A Dickens Landscape" first appeared in 'The Critical Quarterly', Spring 1960, pp. 58-60. It is reprinted in Robert O. Preyer (ed.), 'Victorian Literature: Selected Essays' (1967), pp. 122-25.

35. C.G. Jung, 'The Undiscovered Self' (1957), pp. 108-09. The essential meaning of this passage seems to me to be echoed in the 'noirish' look of *The Wrong Man* itself, including Hitchcock's own 'cameo' appearance on the shadowy sound-stage at the start. Compare note 15 above, and note 36 which follows.

36. Jung's 'The Undiscovered Self' (see last note) was published in America just as *The Wrong Man* appeared. Both works arguably reflect some Cold War attitudes then prevailing widely in society. Fittingly, therefore, Patrick Humphries's 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1986), p. 139, quotes noted critic Colin McArthur: 'the film which perhaps best conveys the underlying unease of 50s America is *The Wrong Man'*. See also Robert J. Corber, 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (1993), p. 171. There, Corber notes Norman Mailer's feeling 'that the only way in which Americans would give up their faith in consensus politics was if they experienced a violent shock to their subjectivity, so deeply rooted was their faith in their identities as Americans'. That seems to me what Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (and *The Birds*, 1963) is also about in part.

37. See François Truffaut, 'Hitchcock' (updated edition, 1978), p. 302.

38. Marshall Deutelbaum, op. cit., says that 'the real thief is often visible in the film as he and Balestrero cross paths'. In fact, Deutelbaum fails to distinguish between actual look-alikes and people who are merely similarly dressed. In Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) we see a woman dressed like the Doris Day character arriving at the Albert Hall: this is presumably Hitchcock's way of telling us that such attire was being generally worn (and that Day, despite not being formally dressed to attend a symphony concert, would be admitted by the Hall doorman). For the record, in *The Wrong Man* I think that the man who bumps into Manny in the Victor Moore Arcade *is* the real criminal, but that the other men seen in the street are merely wearing a similar style of overcoat.

39. Queens is where another Italian-American, and an admirer of *The Wrong Man*, Martin Scorsese, lived as a boy. Scorsese recently discussed in a television series ('American Cinema', episode 1) how he and composer Bernard Herrmann based some of the street scenes in *Taxi Driver* (1976) on ones in *The Wrong Man*. Noteworthy, too, is how Scorsese's *Cape Fear* (1991) deals with the breakdown of a family under pressure in ways that offer some parallels to Hitchcock's film. Compare note 44 below.

40. Quoted in W.J. Harvey, "Chance and Design in 'Bleak House'", in John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (eds), 'Dickens and the Twentieth Century' (1966), p. 156.

41. Victims of Chancery in 'Bleak House' include the hapless 'man from Shropshire', Mr Gridley, and the crazed Miss Flite; likewise, the deaths of Lady Dedlock and Richard Carstone are bound up with it.

42. The 'problem of self' in Dickens is often one of a character's psychological regression and/or inability to adapt. Probably 'Our Mutual Friend' explores that aspect most fully. But if one seeks parallels for Rose's condition as we see it late in *The Wrong Man*, Dickens characters who come readily to mind include Mrs Clenham ('Little Dorrit', 1857) and Miss Havisham ('Great Expectations', 1861).

43. Something I find significant in Esther Summerson's marriage to Dr Allan Woodcourt is that it requires the stepping aside, albeit with evident reluctance, of the patriarchal-figure, John Jarndyce. I'm reminded of how Renata Salecl, "The Right Man and the Wrong Woman", in Slavoj Zizek (ed.), 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)' (1992) sees Manny in *The Wrong Man* as guilty of an unconscious patriarchal (or paternalistic) attitude - to which Salecl attributes the basic cause of Rose's breakdown. See, in particular, p. 190. Also, Dr Theodore Price, in 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality: His 50-Year Obsession with Jack the Ripper and the Superbitch Prostitute - A Psychoanalytic View' (1992), attributes to Hitchcock himself a similar patriarchal attitude, both oppressive and possessive. In this respect, a key chapter is the one on "The Father-Daughter Theme", pp. 229-42.

44. The 1992 edition of Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' reports (p. 257n) that the film's final shot was added by the studio 'over Hitchcock's loud objections'. Spoto adds: 'In fact the Balestreros never recovered from the lived nightmare ...'. Such an outcome is in line with, for example, the one in Australia's real-life 'dingo-baby' case, filmed by Fred Schepisi as *Evil Angels/ A Cry in the Dark* (1988), where Lindy and Michael Chamberlain were divorced soon after their ordeal. Still, Hitchcock's film *is* accurate in reporting Rose Balestrero's release after two years spent in a sanatorium (whether or not she was 'completely cured'): see "Court Turned Into a Movie Set", 'New York Times', 9 April, 1956.

45. Cavell, op. cit., pp. 75-80, has some rather preachy remarks to offer on this topic. He suggests, for example, that 'I [certainly] cannot reach this [noumenal] realm *alone*' (p. 79).

46. Jung, op. cit., p. 117.

47. The question goes back at least as far as Plato, of course. It continues to divide opinion - something on which Hitchcock's films, with their ambiguity, thrive. Cavell, for instance, sounds somewhat chiding when he observes (p. 74): 'Two of the fundamental human properties that human societies have been most anxious to limit are the capacity to relate oneself to the world by knowledge and the capacity to relate oneself to others by marriage.' (Note that I'm interpreting 'knowledge' here to mean *all* kinds of knowledge, including knowledge of what constitutes the noumenal, or at least our relation to it.) On the other hand, and admittedly with perhaps a different emphasis, Friedrich Nietzsche was concerned that we keep our proper sense of the mysterious and the tragic. 'Knowledge kills action', he declared in 'The Birth of Tragedy', 'action requires the veils of illusion.' My point is that Hitchcock (two of whose films bear the title *The Man Who Knew Too Much*) built several of his films on this and related themes, such as a questionable search for perfection in *Spellbound* (1945) and *Vertigo*. See main text.

48. On 21 December, 1954, Dr Sheppard was convicted, on somewhat contentious evidence, of murdering his wife. Meanwhile, newspaper photographs and newsreels had dwelt on his humiliating circumstances when, for example, he was taken to and from prison handcuffed to some resentful- or hangdog-looking felon or other. (Some of the newsreel footage was recently aired on television in an episode, about the Sheppard case, of 'Great Crimes and Trials of the Twentieth Century'. Sheppard was finally acquitted of murder, and given back his freedom, in 1966. He died in 1970.)

49. Quoted in Truffaut, op. cit., p. 296.

50. There's a further possible Dante reference in the credits-sequence of *Vertigo*. There, the camera moves towards a woman's eye, at which point the screen turns red. Then the camera appears to enter the eye and we see a succession of nine revolving spirals of various colours. Finally, the camera exits the eye and at that moment the screen again turns red. It's as if we had been taken on a voyage recalling the nine circles of 'The Inferno'.

51. This article has concentrated, indeed, on 'English' aspects of *The Wrong Man*. Even so, I've omitted to mention the likely influence of some of John Galsworthy's social dramas, especially 'Justice' (1910). As regards trans-Atlantic input, I've had to omit almost entirely reference to the influence of playwright Maxwell Anderson ('Winterset', 1935) whom Hitchcock employed to work on the film's screenplay, and of several other American dramatists and their works, such as Arthur Miller with 'Death of a Salesman' (1949) and Paddy Chayevsky with 'Marty' (1953). For comparison of Henry Fonda's role in *The Wrong Man* to his roles in films for Fritz Lang and John Brahm, see Michael Kerbel, 'Henry Fonda' (1975), pp. 95-98 and passim.

Coming Attractions

"What's so troubling about *Harry*?"; the sources of *Rear Window*; book reviews (incl. Charles L.P.Silet on 'Soul in Suspense'). Plus the usual features, incl. 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted.

OUR BASIC OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION RATE is $22 Aust. ($18 US) for 4 air-posted issues per year. For 4 surface-mailed copies, the rate is $16 Aut. ($14 US). Make drafts, etc payable to 'The MacGuffin'. AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIBERS please pay $16 for 4 issues. THE BASIC OVERSEAS BACK-ISSUE RATE is $6 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (1-3 copies). Otherwise, $5 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (4 or more copies), $4 (Aust. or US) per surface-mailed copy (at least 4 copies please). BACK-ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA are $5 each. Recent 'MacGuffins' have included Dr Greg Garrett's report on the Hitchcock Conference held at Austin, Texas, in March, 1996 (issue 19); issues on *Vertigo* (nos. 11 and 17); on *Foreign Correspondent* (no. 16); on *Spellbound* (no. 15); on *Notorious* (no. 10); and Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (no. 14). These are all recommended issues. A fuller list will be published next time.

ODD SPOT: MOVING PICTURES (EVEN WHOLE SCENES!)

There's the classic story of how an Australian film censor back in the days of silent pictures took objection to the fact that in the first half of E.A. Dupont's *Variete/Vaudeville* (1925) an unmarried couple are shown living together. The censor decided to move the couple's marriage ceremony from the end of the picture to the beginning!

Something similar once happened to a print of Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) when it was shown on Australian television by the Channel Nine organisation. Someone obviously felt that audiences might not enjoy being puzzled by Marnie's strange behaviour early in the film (a source of suspense). So, soon after Marnie meets Mark, her future husband, the Channel Nine people took a scene from late in the film, in which Mark receives an investigator's report on Marnie's background, and inserted it into this first part of the film. Presto, Marnie's relation to her mother was instantly disclosed! (The 'amended' version of *Marnie* was shown by Channel Nine in Melbourne on at least two occasions.)

'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subcribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 21 February 1997 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5

EDITORIAL

THE MAIN ARTICLE THIS time is about *The Trouble With Harry* (1956) and about the notion of the MacGuffin itself. I thought of both those things - the Hitchcock film and the MacGuffin - when last year I read John Buchan's 'John Macnab' (1925). The book's title-character doesn't even exist - the perfect MacGuffin! And Buchan's feeling for landscape often seems to look forward to *Harry*. As in this passage:

> *The highway by the Larrig side slept in the golden afternoon. Not a conveyance had disturbed its peace save the baker's cart from Inverlarrig, which had passed about three o'clock. ... (Chapter 5)*

Such rural idylls have a special place in British literature, and that brings me to my next point.

Last issue, I described how disappointed I had been with the recent book, 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism'. I just wish its author had read Jackie Wullschlager's 'Inventing Wonderland' (1995). Ms Wullschlager has a sure grasp of the Victorian and immediate post-Victorian outlook as reflected in the works of five outstanding children's writers of the time. Her book is sub-titled, 'The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Graham and A.A. Milne'. It shows how these five writers each created a vision of an alternative reality: that is, five visions subsequently beloved by generations of readers who probably first encountered them in childhood.

Now, the tales encompassing these visions constitute a unique form of modern idyll, or 'pastoral'. Ms Wullschlager is very specific. She sees something both bold and optimistic in the summery imaginings of Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' (1865) and the riverbank idyll of Graham's 'The Wind in the Willows' (1908) which reflects the confidence and prosperity of Britain between 1860 and 1914. Such enchanted worlds, she says, could only have been produced by societies 'more innocent, happy to accept absolute values, less knowing and cynical and relativistic than our own'.

The optimism she describes lasted until World War I, when suddenly to die ceased to be the awfully big adventure that Barrie's 'Peter Pan' had seemed to imply. In the 1920s, A.A. Milne's stories of Winnie the Pooh and parts of Barrie's own 'Mary Rose' (1920) - not to speak of a Buchan story like 'John Macnab' or the courtly thrillers of Dornford Yates - clearly represented a *throwback* to happier times. Even so, I want to suggest that Milne's 100 Acre Wood and Barrie's 'island that liked to be visited' have some still later counterparts. I'm thinking of Sparrowswick Heath in Hertfordshire in the novel 'The Trouble With Harry' (1949) and of the suitably autumnal New England we see in Hitchcock's film version of that story ...

Having said that, I'd add that I see no special reason to think that Hitchcock was *more* predisposed to enjoy the ambience that attaches to idylls of childhood than he was to enjoy, say, the crime-filled fictions of Poe and Dickens and Chesterton and even some of the 'penny dreadfuls' of his day (the latter vigorously defended by Chesterton) which we know he also enjoyed. In a sense, both of these things - the idylls *and* the penny dreadfuls, etc - are a form of 'pastoral', of escape. At any rate, that's my position when at one or two points in my analysis of *The Trouble With Harry* I take issue with Lesley Brill's very fine study of that same film but which I nonetheless think lacks a certain balance.

Likewise, though I don't say so in my article, I hope that my analysis may serve as some sort of refutation of Adrian Martin's 'heretical' position expressed last time ('MacGuffin' 20, p. 5), that Hitchcock's work tends to be 'a bit cold, mechanical and limited'. In my view, all artists have their limitations - just like the rest of us. But as Jung showed, in some famous studies of 'individuation', it's possible for an individual to mature into a more rounded and 'complete' person than when he/she started out. So that's another of the hidden themes of my article.

Since our last issue, so many people have been in touch - many of them by email - that I can scarcely thank them all here. But I'll try. Steven L. DeRosa, Dan Auiler, and Jim Davidson were among those who shared their first-hand impressions

of the newly restored print of *Vertigo* in 70mm. Steven's article, "A Very Different 'Slice of Cake'", appears in this issue. So, too, does Jim Davidson's letter.

Martin Grams Jnr has been doing remarkable work researching the radio and television series 'Suspense', to which Hitchcock was a regular listener/viewer. Hitchcock's association with the series actually went further than that, and I hope to publish soon on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page Martin's article called "Murder and *Suspense*: Hitchcock's Established Reputation". Meanwhile, I can reveal here that on July 22, 1940, Hitchcock directed his first show for American radio, an adaptation of Mrs Marie Belloc Lowndes's 'The Lodger', starring Herbert Marshall. Co-starring as the husband and wife who suspect that their boarder may be Jack the Ripper were Edmund Gwenn and Lurene Tuttle. Gwenn was actually repeating the role taken by his brother, Arthur Chesney, in Hitchcock's original 1926 film of the same story. And character actress Tuttle would play another wifely role for director Hitchcock exactly 20 years later, as Mrs Al Chambers in *Psycho*.

Nandor Bokor teaches at the University of Technology in Budapest, and just last February was responsible for the publication in the Hungarian language of Truffaut's 'Hitchcock'. Nandor has written a very readable account of his 'Hitchcock tour' of the US a few years ago, during which he visited as many Hitchcock locations as he could. That account will be up on our Web Page soon.

Also up there soon will be author Talmage Powell's account of working for Shamley Productions on no less than three episodes of the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series. Talmage remembers with pleasure the atmosphere at Shamley under producer Joan Harrison as being the most pleasant for a writer he has encountered anywhere.

I'm very grateful to Elyse Hayes for sending me a copy of the Alfred Hitchcock 'Pathfinder' she compiled just last year. A 19-page list of resources for students setting out to do work on Hitchcock, it can be obtained by emailing Elyse at <EMIHayes@aol.com>. (If you order a copy, be sure to reimburse Elyse for postage.)

Special thanks to all our letter writers in this issue. Equally, my thanks to the many people with whom I've enjoyed chatting about Hitchcock and movies generally, either by mail or email: Jay, Leslie, Patrik, Andrew (of the *Vertigo* Web Page), Susan, Race, Pam - and quite a few others!

Lastly, it's good news that the Film/Alfred Hitchcock SIG got a write-up in the most recent issue of the Australian Mensa journal, 'Tableaus'. Australian SIGs co-ordinator Jeremy Malcolm was responsible for that. (I enjoyed being interviewed, Jeremy!) We may be able to welcome some new Australian members soon, I trust.

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. Certain items have been held over until next time. One of them is the Index for issues 17-20.

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

British version of *Strangers on a Train* screens in US

Hard on the heels of the 'restored' *Vertigo* (see article "A Very Different 'Slice of Cake'" in this issue), another Hitchcock film was re-released in the US at the end of last year. As mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 8, the British version of *Strangers on a Train* (1951) runs two minutes longer than the more generally-known version. In particular, a homoerotic attraction of Bruno for Guy receives more emphasis in the dialogue of the opening scene on the train. Also, the ending is different - the scene with the clergman has been omitted.

Though the British version had a Cinemax airing in the US a few years ago, and has since been shown there on cable TV, the recent screenings at the Castro in San Francisco and the Nuart in Los Angeles constituted its first general cinema release. An article by Bill Desowitz in the 'Los Angeles Times' (November 17) gives further information about why Hitchcock released two versions. It seems that he trimmed the opening train sequence after a sneak preview in Los

Angeles. He also paid unusual attention to the final scene (known as 'the minister's tag'), shooting it in several ways, including using the same actor in nonclerical garb.

Thus, speculates Desowitz, Hitchcock may well have prepared two versions of *Strangers on a Train* as a precautionary strategy. For the final US release, he preferred a tighter opening, and for the UK release he retained the complete opening yet cut 'the minister's tag', presumably to avoid religious controversy.

Out-shining the others

Winner in most of the main categories, including Best Film, at this year's Australian Film Institute Awards was *Shine*, the story of the difficult life of concert pianist David Helfgott.

The film's director, Scott Hicks, received the prize for Best Direction; Geoffrey Rush, who portrayed the adult Helfgott who suffers from a nervous disease, won for Best Actor.

Rebecca a flop!

We're talking about the CD-ROM issued by Rutgers University Press and called 'The *Rebecca* Project', which scrutinises Hitchcock's 1940 classic film using everything from archival screen tests to Lacanian critique. A recent report said that fewer than 250 copies had been sold.

In a way, that statistic doesn't surprise us. When we inquired about purchasing a copy of the Project, we learned that it's only available for Macintosh computers. Sounds to us like the marketing-folk at Rutgers have still to enter the 1990s. Someone should tell them about IBM and the success of the PC. (Notwithstanding, 'The MacGuffin' hopes to review 'The *Rebecca* Project' soon.)

Publications

We haven't space this issue to list all the items we'd like. Try to check out the list that's on the 'MacGuffin' Web Page. But here's information about the latest 'Hitchcock Annual' (1996-1997 edition). Highlights include an interview with Donald Spoto, a full shot-list for *The Lodger*, information about Hitchcock's 1945 propaganda short called *Watchtower Over Tomorrow* (on the concept of the United Nations), and Professor Christopher Morris writing on "Feminism, Deconstruction, and *Vertigo*". The latter article puts a Nietzschean slant on Hitchcock's great film, thus complementing such other recent analyses along similar lines as those in respectively Royal S. Brown's 'Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music' and (even) parts of the 'MacGuffin' Web Page.

Subscription rates (US Currency) for the 'Hitchcock Annual' are $10 for individuals, $12 for institutions. Foreign subscribers should add $3. Mail a cheque or money order to P.O. Box 2568, New London, NH 03257.

- Some forthcoming books we're looking forward to include Dan Auiler's account of the making of *Vertigo* (to be published by St Martin's Press in the Fall); Steven L. DeRosa's book on Hitchcock's collaboration with screenwriter John Michael Hayes (publication date to be set); and Martin Grams Jnr's study of a classic radio and TV series, '*Suspense*: Twenty Years of Thrills and Chills' ('due for a 1997 release').

Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* not opening just yet

Speaking of things we're looking forward to, a note posted on the Web's 'Kubrick Multimedia Page' reports that *Eyes Wide Shut* is 'Now in Production, Expected Fall of '97 at the earliest.'

Reportedly, the film has finished shooting in London. The 'Kubrick Multimedia Page' says that the film's plot 'essentially deals with married psychologists (Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman) who betray each other with a pair of husband-and-wife patients (Jennifer Jason-Leigh, Harvey Keitel). (Cruise sleeps with Jason-Leigh, Kidman with Keitel.)' The script is said to be written by Frederic Raphael from 'Rhapsody: A Dream Novel' by Arthur Schnitzler (the Austrian writer, two of whose often strongly erotic works provided the basis for the Max Ophuls films, *Liebelei*, 1932, and *La Ronde*, 1950). We sense affinities with the flashback shots of dancing couples in the Overlook Hotel in Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) ...

Hitchcock statue gets the bird

The town of Dinard in Brittany hosts an annual film festival of some stature. But besides the stature, there's also a statue. It's of Alfred Hitchcock, and it stands proudly on a pathway to the nearby beach. Sculpted seagulls perch on Hitchcock's shoulders, and are sometimes joined there by the real thing. Believe it or not, smaller versions of the statue are handed out as prizes at the Dinard festival. Last year, the Golden Hitchcock went to Michael Winterbottom's *Jude*, and the Silver to Angela Pope's *Hollow Reed*. The same festival also featured a clutch of selected British movies from the 1930s - Brittany is a popular resort for English visitors, after all. Hitchcock titles shown included *Young and Innocent* and *The Lady Vanishes*. We're told that all the screenings played to enthusiastic packed houses.

LETTERS

Kent Jones, Cappa Productions, USA

I had some thoughts on *The Wrong Man* that I wanted to share. This is a film about which I've always felt a little ambiguous. For me, it's exceptionally brilliant and frightening right up to the scene where Henry Fonda and Vera Miles have the argument in their bedroom, and then I think it goes off the rails a bit, not much but just enough to knock the film off course, as happens occasionally with Hitchcock. I think the reason is that Hitchcock becomes curiously abstract when confronted with the wife's madness. It becomes another threat to Fonda, and the scene doesn't have the bone-chilling specificity of the rest of the movie. Perhaps it's something to do with the way that Miles plays it (very *Snake Pit*-ish, close to Novak standing at the ringed tree stump in *Vertigo*), but whereas the rest of the film has been so honest and straightforward about money and middle-class life, this scene seems too telescoped, relying as it does on old ideas of a woman's madness, etc. Perhaps in order to do it right Hitchcock would have had to make a much longer film and lay out the wife's disengagement just as methodically as the prison scenes or the inquiries into the whereabouts of the witnesses. And this is part of the reason that, as magnificently as Hitchcock films it, I don't admire the famous dissolve from Fonda to the real perpetrator as much as I might. In Godard's latest *Histoire(s) du Cinema* instalment he shows that scene and claims that Hitchcock and Dreyer were the only people who knew how to film miracles. Maybe, but for me the necessity of revealing the thief has preceded the desire to show a miracle in progress: it seems to me like an expedient (albeit beautiful and arresting) narrative device more than anything else.

Since Hitchcock's body of work is so rich and endlessly rewarding, its failures are often just as engrossing as its successes. A few years ago in 'Cahiers du Cinéma' there was a roundtable discussion between some French filmmakers about the importance of Bresson's *Pickpocket*. André Téchiné finally decided that as much as he liked Bresson he thought Hitchcock was the superior filmmaker. I spent some time with Téchiné recently and brought this up. He became reverential on the subject of Hitchcock, and we agreed that he's one of the most important filmmakers, perhaps *the* most important filmmaker, for young people cultivating a passion for cinema. I remember myself at the age of 13, when I was first starting to become aware of what a director did, what editing was, with a worn copy of Andrew Sarris's 'The American Cinema' under my arm at all times. I saw *Psycho* on television for the first time late at night in the spring of that year. I think of that experience often - so clarifying, so fulfilling, so mysterious. As a kid I didn't really understand, for instance, the perceived sexual deviations of Norman's mother, nor did I understand the significance of 'Eroica' on the turntable. But I experienced the feeling of the close-up of the record and the shot of the bronze folded-hands so clearly and directly. The next day, my mother and I drove up into the Catskills to see a family friend, a long ride into the mountains through forests and pools of sunlight. On my lap was Robin Wood's book about Hitchcock. My passion for films had begun when I was 8, but it was solidified and brought to a new level when I was 13, by Alfred Hitchcock.

[Editor's note. Many thanks, Kent! There's so much here. I suspect we all agree with you that Rose's breakdown in *The Wrong Man* isn't as well-handled as it might have been. But perhaps the dissolve to the real criminal at the moment of Manny's prayer is a different matter. I find that Hitchcock's capacity to always put the narrative first goes with his best films' absolute minimum of foreclosure. Each is 'only a story', so nothing has to be denied! In the article on *The Wrong Man* last issue, I found it useful to draw a parallel with Schopenhauer's essay, "On Religion: A Dialogue". (Note the narrative format.) To me, that's a remarkably *open* work. Now, let me skip to the 'Eroica' reference in *Psycho*. It's so *suggestive*, isn't it? I mean, Robin Wood is right to note the scene's mustiness and stagnation. Raymond Durgnat is equally right to think of 'erotica'. And just today I've been struck by how the Beethoven citation in that film has a parallel in the *Mozart* reference in *The Wrong Man*. About the latter film, then, I think it's important to say that its 'miracles' always concern many more people than just Manny and Rose ...]

Evan Williams, Killara, NSW, Australia

In note 26 to your piece on *The Wrong Man* ('MacGuffin' 20, pp. 23-24), you referred to Steven C. Smith's comment in his book on Bernard Herrmann that the composer had been pleased by a review of the film by an Australian critic (identity unknown), who had written perceptively about the music.

This review was written by Lindsey Browne, and appeared in the Sydney 'Sun-Herald' of June 23 1957. Lindsey was also the music critic of the 'Sydney Morning Herald', and his film reviews appeared in the Sunday edition of the paper. (Those were the days when Australian newspaper proprietors were too parsimonious to employ more than one writer on 'cultural' matters, and too mean-spirited to give them by-lines.) Lindsey is still active in his 80s and continues to compose cryptic crossword puzzles for various papers. He was also a cricket writer in the Cardus tradition. When I read your note I guessed that the only reviewer at the time with a knowledge of both films and music was probably Lindsey, and a quick check at the State Library confirmed my hunch. A pity Herrmann can no longer write to express appreciation of our far-flung antipodean insights. The context of the quote is as follows:

> *The film is a certainty for our 10-best list for 1957 - if for no other reason than that it is a classic demonstration of the use of extreme quietness in developing suspense. The gaunt sound-track music, for instance, is a series of plucked low notes from the musician's own double bass, always in a rhythm to suggest the footfalls of a ghost - and this gives a weird feeling that ghastly intangibles are stalking the 'hero' into a world of eerie bewilderment and horror ...*

Philip Kemp, London, England

Fascinating to hear about the re-organised version of *Marnie* on Channel Nine ("Odd Spot", 'MacGuffin' 20); it might be interesting to collect other examples of this kind of 'clarifying' or (prudish) reworking. Powell and Pressbuger's *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), of course, got comprehensively reordered to eliminate the 'confusing' flashback structure, with the whole 'War begins at midnight' sequence shoved to the end of the movie. Then there's Garbo's last film, *Two-Faced Woman* (1941), where she plays a wife who, to shake up her husband's ideas, pretends to be her own frivolous sister. The Catholic church raised such a howl of outrage that Metro, to Cukor's fury, withdrew the film and inserted an extra scene to show that the husband knew about his wife's ruse all along - thus totally screwing up the plot. And someone once told me they'd seen a version of Clouzot's *Les Daboliques* (1954) on Spanish TV where a scene of Paul Meurisse (the husband) prowling around the school was taken from early on in the film and re-inserted after his supposed murder, just to make it nice and clear he wasn't really dead ...

Ross Campbell, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia

Many thanks for your message regarding the restoration of *Vertigo* which I found of enormous interest. Most unsettling was the information about the newly recorded 'foley' tracks including effects that were not on the original, e.g. seagulls over San Francisco Bay.

[On the other hand, the visuals would seem to be intact, judging from the November 'American Cinematographer' with its] superb colour photographs drawn directly from the restored print on 70mm, which are an almost exact match of the original. I can say that with a measure of certainty, being very familiar, as you know, with a 35mm Technicolour 1958 print. The muddy Eastmancolour reprints in the 1980s were a disgrace and are still being booked by cinemas.

P.S. The best-ever recording of Bernard Herrmann's film music has hit town: the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen *in the original tempi* on Sony Classical SK 62700. *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Psycho*, *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Torn Curtain*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *Taxi Driver*. Superb quality!

Jim Davidson, Concord, California, USA

[Editor's note. Jim Davidson attended the San Francisco premiere of the 'restored' print of *Vertigo* and found most of the film's images 'incredibly deep and rich, especially the interior of Ernie's'. His letter, though, is mainly about the occasion and what it suggested to him. Immediately following this letter, we print another first-hand account of viewing the new print of the film on 70mm. Readers' comments are invited.]

I've thought a bit about *Vertigo* since seeing it with an audience. There was some laughter in some of the wrong places and, while part of this can be attributed to the film's just being 'dated' (such as when Midge mentions the 'gay old bohemian days of gay old San Francisco'), I think that it partly reveals a weakness of the film. I have often felt that *Vertigo* has some serious problems in the way the characters are written and that, while it is a truly beautiful film, it is something of a flawed masterpiece. For instance, it seems to me that Scottie falls too fast and hard for Madeleine, that he is too easily drawn into Madeleine and the story of Carlotta Valdes. One of the scenes the audience snickered at was when Scottie and Gavin are having a drink at the club and Scottie says of his liquor, 'I *need* this!' It just doesn't ring true somehow. Also, Scottie's relationship with Midge seems problematic. Why does he just seem to hang around her apartment all the time?

By the way, I should say that I thought your review of the book, 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism', in 'MacGuffin' 20 was outstanding. I agree with you wholeheartedly - I was very thrilled when I first found the book and thought that it was full of promise, but was somewhat disappointed that the themes weren't carried through fully. Also enjoyed the long article on *The Wrong Man* although I am not yet convinced the film is a 'near masterpiece'. I think Fonda's performance and the way Manny's character is written are serious flaws in that film.

A Very Different 'Slice of Cake': Restoring Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*

By Steven L. DeRosa

AS I SAT IN New York's Ziegfeld Theater on the first day of the commercial run of the restored *Vertigo*, I could not help but put myself in the place of John 'Scottie' Ferguson, the obsessed detective played by James Stewart. For through the course of the narrative, Scottie is subjected to an impostor: the Madeleine he falls in love with is not really Madeleine at all, but rather, as the second half of the film reveals, Judy Barton. Having first heard the soft, tortured whispers of Madeleine, it was easy for Scottie to fall in love. But when he meets Judy as Judy, his ears are subjected to her somewhat harsh, nasal voice, as she utters such phrasings as 'What do you want?' and 'Go on, beat it.' The reason I felt like Scottie was because the film I was hearing was not *Vertigo*, but rather a poor imitation.

Robert Harris and James Katz are to be commended for their painstaking effort. However, after looking forward to the presentation of the 'restored' print for some time, I am saddened to say that the effort was disappointing.

The presentation at the Ziegfeld opened with a filmed introduction by Martin Scorsese, who went on to extol the virtues of *Vertigo*, the genius of Alfred Hitchcock and the importance and urgency of film preservation and restoration. Scorsese has long been a champion of film preservation and has been responsible for much interest in the rediscovery of both underrated classics as well as highly regarded films such as *Vertigo*. In the restored print following the Universal logo, the original Paramount Release and VistaVision logos have been restored to the film -- both had been absent from the prints and videos of the film since Universal released the picture in 1983.

The main title sequence, designed by Saul Bass and accompanied by Bernard Herrmann's brilliant score, was in excellent condition. There was only one noticeably torn frame in the print, during the scene where Scottie asks Judy to change the color of her hair. And except for the flashback sequence where Judy (Kim Novak) recalls her climb to the tower where Gavin Elster waits with the body of his wife, the negative seems to be in fine shape. That sequence in the restored print seems to have suffered the most from differential shrinkage (of the black and white separations) and appears rather 'dupey'. The timing of the print was also uneven. In particular the finale, where Scottie brings Judy back to the scene of the crime, was printed much too dark. It is one of the greatest sequences in the Hitchcock canon and much of its impact was lost due to the fact that the actors were difficult to see.

Where the 'restored' version fails however, is in the area I thought it would succeed greatly. The texture, tone, and level of many of the film's sound effects and in some instances, dialogue passages, have been degraded for the sake of utilizing a digitized recording of Bernard Herrmann's original score. Employing foley artists to create whole new sound effects tracks, the restorers claim in the press kit for the release to have utilized the pages and pages of Hitchcock's personal sound notes; however, Harris and Katz have rather boldly second guessed Alfred Hitchcock. Instead of trying to recreate the sound effects as closely as possible to the original film, the 'restoration' uses additional sound effects which were never there to begin with, and in a few instances sound effects have been omitted.

These differences may seem minor to the casual viewer. However, to someone familiar with the film, from the very first gun shot of the opening sequence to the ringing of the tower bell in the finale, the differences are jarringly apparent. These variations from the original work go beyond the scope of what a restoration should be.

The level of each newly created footstep, the rustling of papers, and the automobile sounds appeared too hot throughout the picture. Perhaps I am being too critical of the mix, feeling that the sound effects were not at all subtle -- almost as if the foley artists wanted to call attention to their work -- but one cannot be too critical of the creation of effects that were never there before, especially since the restorers had the original film to guide them.

At a single viewing of the 'restored *Vertigo*, I noted the following major differences. During the scene where Madeleine jumps into San Francisco Bay, the original picture does not contain sounds of seagulls; the 'restoration' does. The day after Scottie saved Madeleine from the bay, he follows her in his car as she drives back to his house. At one moment a car can be seen pulling into the street on the right side of the frame. In the original film, the sound of a car horn accompanies this point-of-view shot, and is absent in the 'restoration'. Later in the same sequence, Scottie makes a gesture to engage the hand-brake as he parks his car, and the accompanying sound effect is no longer there. In the scene in Ransohoff's, where Scottie gives a saleswoman specific instructions as to the clothes he wishes to buy for Judy, the 'restoration' now includes the familiar chime of department store elevators, whereas the original soundtrack does not. When Scottie is waiting for Judy to return from the beauty salon, he stands in the doorway to her hotel room, and in the original picture there is the sound of the elevator door sliding open and then Judy appears. In the 'restored' version, the sliding elevator door is replaced with a bell sounding the arrival of the elevator. It is outrageous that such liberties were taken with an Academy Award Nominated sound track.

Audiences in 1958 got to see *Vertigo* printed in IB Technicolor - the color process in which colored dyes (yellow, cyan and magenta) are actually placed on the film. The beauty of true Technicolor is obvious to anyone fortunate enough to see a screening of an archival print in a revival house or museum. On May 25 1996, the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, New York, screened an original 35mm IB Technicolor print of *Vertigo*. The print, while suffering some signs of its age (1958), was quite beautiful to see. There were colors and subtleties that I had never seen before in any of the 1983 release prints.

Harris and Katz went to great pains to locate original costumes and paint-chips from antique cars in order to match the look intended by the original filmmakers. The purpose of this seems most a means of showing off. IB Technicolor prints of *Vertigo* are in existence. These original prints would have served as the best guide to match the colors and sound. The green dress worn by Kim Novak does look a certain way in reality, but that is not necessarily the shade of green that it might appear in Technicolor. All the restorers really needed to do was look at the original film as printed in Technicolor, and sequence by sequence, scene by scene, they would have had the same palette from which Hitchcock created the look of *Vertigo*. Aside from some printing problems, the restorers have done an admirable job pictorially. It has been rumored that subsequent 35mm prints may be printed in IB Technicolor -- let's hope so.

One final plea to Tom Pollock at Universal. Mr. Pollock, please, for the sake of Alfred Hitchcock, the studio, and generations to come, who will want to enjoy and study *Vertigo*, be sure to include the original sound track on one of the audio channels for the laser disc release.

BLOOPERS

Nothing too calamitous this time. But I regret an ambiguity last issue, in note 17 on p. 12, where I referred to certain critics of 'Cahiers du Cinéma' who had 'rather effusively and unsystematically stated' what they understood to be Hitchcock's metaphysics. I certainly didn't mean to suggest that it was Hitchcock himself who was being effusive and unsystematic!

Also, I may have been mistaken when I suggested on p. 21 that Hitchcock had based certain shots of the imprisoned Manny Balestrero in *The Wrong Man* on television footage of Ohio physician Dr Samuel Sheppard, who had recently been arrested for murder. I now seem to recall reading somewhere that Hitchcock had based these shots on footage of the head of the New York Stock Exchange, who likewise had recently been arrested on a capital charge.

And, yes, the co-restorer on 70mm of *Vertigo*, Robert Harris, has the middle initial 'A'. (See 'MacGuffin' 20, p. 2.) So he's almost certainly the Robert A. Harris who in 1976 co-authored a solid, well-illustrated book called 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock'.

Finally, in 'MacGuffin' 16, on p. 11, Adrian Martin wondered why the credits of the recent movie *Lifepod* (d. Ron Silver) say that it's based on 'a short story by Alfred Hitchcock and Harry Sylvester' rather than on the Hitchcock film itself as officially scripted by Jo Swerling from a story by John Steinbeck. In fact, there was indeed such a short story by Hitchcock and Sylvester: it appeared in 'Collier's' magazine, November 13 1943, pp. 16-17, 52-54, 56-58. (Source: Sidney Gottlieb, ed., 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', 1995, p. 329.)

[Editor's note. As promised last time, here is an article written by actor Miles Mander who played the villain, Levet, in Alfred Hitchcock's first film as director, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925). That film and Hitchcock's next, *The Mountain Eagle* (1926), were both shot in Germany at the so-called Emelka studio (the name comes from the letters M.L.K). The article appeared in 'Kinematograph Weekly', September 10, 1925, p. 54.]

Production Methods in Bavaria

by MILES MANDER

Who has been playing "Heavy" in the Gainsborough Unit at Munich

EMELKA (M.L.K.) or Münchener Lichtspiel-Kunst, i.e., "Munich Moving Picture Art," is the second largest film concern in Central Europe. By virtue of its many affiliated companies its directors control the film interests of Bavaria and Southern Germany, to say nothing of their connections in the countries of the Little Entente, the Balkans and the Near East.

It is rumoured locally that their net profit for the year ending 1924 was £134,000. In addition to their huge circuit of theatres they are producing at the rate of 26 pictures a year.

They have not until recently worried about the English or American markets, having regarded them as unapproachable with the purely German films which they were manufacturing, some of which were made under the factory conditions which have obtained in certain English studios.

However, in the last six months things have altered. Two English units have been in Munich collaborating with the Emelka concern in the production of pictures destined for a world market. The directors have been men well known in England, Walter Niebuhr and Alfred Hitchcock. The stories have been in both cases by English authors, and the artistes and finance international.

The studio is situate at Geiselgasteig, four miles outside Munich. The Emelka estate, which represents a clearing of 50 acres in beautiful forest country, is growing into a miniature Universal City. A marked progression has taken place since my last visit four years ago. The studio, in which five sets can be comfortably erected at once, is a daylight one. Lighting equipment is adequate, although not of the first efficiency, but in other respects production facilities excel anything we have in this country.

There is a good canteen, resting-rooms and beer garden, a most extensive and well-kept wardrobe, and a professional friseur or "maker-up" is always at hand both for the leading artistes and crowd. Hot baths are an adjunct to the dressing-rooms.

The staff, particularly the electricians and carpenters, are more industrious and quicker workers than one is accustomed to find in English studios, although they only get from 30s. to £3 per week with 25 per cent. increase for overtime.

There are, perhaps, 30 or 40 full-size and permanent outside sets representing almost everything from a Venetian canal to a Burmese village. The river Isar flows within a stone's-throw, and there are numerous beautiful lakes within a few kilometres, which furnish the necessary medium for aquatic scenes.

Apart from the international co-operation mentioned above, there have been other visitors to Munich. The behaviour of some of these people has been anything but commendable. They have now left, but in some cases the police and abundant creditors are still seeking their whereabouts.

This would not concern us if it were not for the fact that the film people in question were English-speaking foreigners, and for this reason the Bavarians are not all able or willing to classify them as anything but English.

It is somewhat disconcerting to follow in the wake of people who are so notorious that they cannot obtain work either in this country or their own, and in the interest of the English film trade the Germans should be acquainted of these facts. As Emelka enjoys a reputation of high integrity, it is the more unfortunate.

The Universal Hitchcock: 'The Trouble With Harry' (1956)

Flaggin' the train to Tuscaloosa
Oh how I love that choo choo sound.
Flaggin' the train to Tuscaloosa
Flaggin' the train that's homeward bound.
- Song in *The Trouble With Harry*

If we can imagine an unrepressed man ... such a man ... would have a body freed from ... fantasies of return to the maternal womb. ... In such a man would be fulfilled on earth ... the resurrection of the body, in a form, as Luther said, free from death and filth.
- Norman O. Brown[1]

[Synopsis of the film. On a glorious autumn day in Vermont, and into the moonlit night, each of four people thinks that he or she has killed Harry Worp, whose body lies on a hillside in the woods. The people are all local residents: the retired seaman Captain Wiles (Edmund Gwenn), the middle-aged spinster Miss Gravely (Mildred Natwick), the petite, very pretty Jennifer Rogers (Shirley MacLaine), whose son, Arnie, is aged four, and the handsome painter Sam Marlowe (John Forsyth). In the space of a few hours, the four inter and disinter Harry several times. However, in doing so, they arouse the suspicions of local Deputy Sheriff Calvin Wiggs (Royal Dano), who lives with his widowed mother (Mildred Dunnock) in the nearby 'village' - the latter really little more than a church cum schoolhouse adjoining the Wiggs general store. The four must use teamwork to foil Calvin's investigations. Finally, the eccentric local doctor, Dr Greenbow, pronounces that Harry had after all died of natural causes, and thereby frees Jennifer (widow of Harry, it turns out) to marry Sam, and Miss Gravely to wed the Captain.]

ALMOST INADVERTENTLY, THIS ARTICLE illustrates various theories of mine about the MacGuffin. Recall that Hitchcock spoke of the MacGuffin as something of no real consequence - yet about which both audience and characters feel concern. The jewels in *To Catch a Thief* (1955), let's say. Well, there's surely a sense in which the jewels are nothing at all. Like the film itself and its glittering cast, they merely provide an occasion for fantasy. Moreover, once the film ends and the projector is turned off, what remains? Just the memory of an 'insubstantial pageant' that has melted 'into thin air'! Small wonder, I think, that Hitchcock once wanted to name a film of his after those lines from Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'.[2]

Then, too, the MacGuffin reminds me of what early-childhood researcher, D.W. Winnicott, calls a 'transitional object'.[3] In stressing how every child must find out that it and the mother are not the same person, Winnicott tells us that the child's 'disillusionment' will invariably take place around its first cultural artefact. For that purpose, practically anything will serve: a piece of cloth, a teddy bear, a ritual. That's to say, the object has no intrinsic value, it merely provides the occasion for a growing-up experience. To me, that's exactly the way both a Hitchcock film and its MacGuffin are designed to work.[4]

Nor is that all that Winnicott can tell the Hitchcock scholar. For instance, the very young child is said to experience moments of instinctual tension, connected mainly with hunger. So strong does this tension become that the baby fantasises or hallucinates a ferocious cannibalistic attack on the mother's breast. As paraphrased by author David Holbrook:

The cannibalistic attack on the mother's breast, a breast (we may remember) for some time thought by the infant to be part of itself, makes it feel that the consequence of its assault may be an 'emptiness' in the mother - Winnicott calls it 'a hole', where 'once was a body of richness'. It also feels, since it was taking in good from this source, that now in its own inside it contains both good and 'self-supportive' things, and, in conflict with these, bad and persecutory things - which return to attack it, as it were, in consequence of its attacks on the mother. The 'hole' is also felt to be within itself.[5]

By analysing *The Trouble With Harry*, I hope to show how a Hitchcock film refers to, and in a sense makes reparation for, the time when real or imagined injury was done to the mother. And how the MacGuffin plays a significant part in this

project by invoking for the viewer unconscious memories of the 'hole' seemingly located both 'within' and 'without' his/her own body - as well as nowhere.

Let's be clear at the outset about what constitutes the MacGuffin in *Harry*. Without a doubt, it's the troublesome, unlamented corpse of Harry Worp himself. The fact that Harry is regularly buried and dug up, which also involves the making and unmaking of a 'hole', shows well enough that he's simply the 'transitional object' whereby a new order of being is postulated! A time of guilt is evoked, and a 'way out' implied, almost simultaneously. Note that I'm far from denying *Harry* its status as a comedy. Very possibly, it's one of the most delightful ever filmed. But I'm also agreeing with Professor Lesley Brill when he insists that the film is about rebirth and resurrection.[6] As for the association of MacGuffins and holes, Hitchcock himself would surely verify that. Discussing *North by Northwest* (1959), he pointed out to François Truffaut how its MacGuffin consisted of a trade in 'government secrets', or 'just nothing at all' ...[7]

Here are a couple more preliminary observations. I've said that there's an element of reparation in *Harry*. According to Holbrook, many of us spend our lives making symbolic 'restitution' for what we feel we owe our mothers.[8] Moreover, the earth itself always remains a particularly suggestive site. We speak of 'Mother earth'; and astronauts in space are reported to have pangs of 'earth-sickness'.[9] Yet we don't have to leave the earth to feel that, of course. In *Harry*, Sam Marlowe sings robustly about the same idea: the urge to return 'home'. The only trouble with such a quest is the fact that it may indeed take a lifetime. Not only is it based in fantasy dating from a period even before the infant's 'disillusionment', but what we're really talking of here - the nature of the quest - is the entire journey from womb to tomb, to one's final 'resting-place'. So there's a nice irony in the remark heard near the end of *Harry*, to the effect that Harry Worp is now 'going home for the last time'. His quest has been all too successful!

The same theme is among the most universal of all. You also find it, for example, in the films of Howard Hawks (notably, in some of the sing-songs in *The Big Sky*, 1952, and *Hatari!*, 1962), and in the titles of some of the novels of reminiscence written by Thomas Wolfe (such as 'Look Homeward, Angel', 1929, and 'You Can't Go Home Again', 1940). And here's one more example. In at least two novels[10] by Charles Dickens (1812-1870), he includes this significant piece of doggerel:

> *Thrown on the wide world, doom'd to wander and roam,*
> *Bereft of his parents, bereft of a home ...*

The theme of lost childhood has been a familiar one to perusers of literature and the arts for at least the past 200 years.

On that note, here are some brief remarks about sources I've drawn on for this article. Some of the sources I've already mentioned.

- David Holbrook, 'The Quest For Love' (1964). A study of certain literary works from Chaucer to D.H. Lawrence. This fine book by a British poet and scholar, based on the theories of infancy and childhood proposed by Winnicott and others, remains seminal to my own thinking about such Hitchcock films as *The Trouble With Harry* and *Marnie* (1964).
- Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death' (1959). Subtitled 'The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History', Brown's linking of Nietzsche and Freud is another powerful book that can tell you more about Hitchcock's films (without ever mentioning them) than nearly any other.
- Peter V. Marinelli, 'Pastoral' (1971). A fine monograph which distils a huge amount of wisdom concerning a topic itself vast: the literary genre that deals with rural life, often in an idealised way.
- Lesley Brill, 'The Hitchcock Romance' (1988). Subtitled 'Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films', and reviewed very favourably in 'MacGuffin' 2, it contains the best essay there is on *Harry*. The present article draws on, and attempts some critique of, Brill's understanding of that film.
- Jack Trevor Story, 'The Trouble With Harry' (1949). A delight, and showing a rich knowledge of the pastoral form.
- Paul Klee, 'Paul Klee on Modern Art' (1924; 1948). A celebrated monograph by Hitchcock's favourite painter, it has some Nietzschean undertones.
- Arthur Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation' (1819,1844; 1958), in two volumes. A description of the world in truly universal terms which profoundly influenced the young Nietzsche. In my view, it comes very close to matching Hitchcock's own understanding and attitudes. (Recall that Hitchcock was critical of some of *Nietzsche's* more original notions.)
- Charles Dickens, 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' (1870). Dickens and Hitchcock have much in common, as Edward Buscombe pointed out in his 1970 article, "Dickens and Hitchcock", in 'Screen' 11, no. 4-5. In the present article, I once or twice use 'Drood' as a sort of 'parallel text' to illuminate aspects of *Harry*.

- E.M. Forster, "What I Believe" (1939). This famous essay seems to me relevant to a consideration of the characters in *Harry*.

* * *

> *Man, the discontented animal, unconsciously seeking the life proper to his species, is man in history: repression and the repetition-compulsion generate historical time. ...[U]nrepressed life would be timeless or in eternity.*
>
> - Norman O. Brown[11]

> *'Don't you think about Harry. He's part of the earth. He's with eternity, the ages. Take my word for it, Harry's ancient history.'*
>
> - Sam Marlowe, in *The Trouble With Harry*

As this is to be an article on 'the universal Hitchcock', let me start by commenting on an apparent paradox. *The Trouble With Harry* is set firmly and unequivocally in New England in autumn, when the leaves are turning.[12] An element of local colour - if you will - was inevitable in the film, and to help him render it Hitchcock again employed gifted screenwriter John Michael Hayes, a native of Worcester, Massachusetts. He also drew once more on the great talents of cinematographer Robert Burks and composer Bernard Herrmann. All of these people responded most ably to various nuances of the story plus several knowledgeable points of detail that Hayes himself gave the script. Yet for every *localised* detail, I think it's fair to say that there were others, of sheer universal appeal. The signs of mutability and change, and even the mechanics of comedy itself, are just two aspects of 'the life-force' which is so much on display in *Harry*, and with which this article is basically concerned. New England can speak, as it were, for (old) England, where the original novel is set. Yet nor need an audience in Belgrade or Tokyo or Melbourne feel estranged from the film's goings-on. I mention those three places for particular reasons. Belgrade: because my 1970 copy of the novel notes how it 'has been translated all over the world - most recently in [the former] Yugoslavia'. Tokyo: because, watching *Harry*, I can't help thinking of the Japanese aesthetic term *mono no aware*, traditionally used to describe 'a serene acceptance of a transient world, ... a [feeling of being content] created by the knowledge that ... leaving it is, after all, in the natural state of things' - and defined thus by Donald Richie in his excellent book 'Ozu'.[13] Melbourne: because the vivid countryside in Hitchcock's film evokes for me rich memories of holidaying in the Dandenong Ranges outside Melbourne. The slightest rustle of a fallen leaf, or honk of an unseen truck slowing down (or not slowing down) on a nearby road, when I hear these in *Harry*, stirs me.[14] I trust that my readers feel similarly ...

Now, no sooner has Sam said to Jennifer that 'Harry's ancient history' than there's a knock at the door. Miss Gravely and the Captain have come to insist that Harry be dug up again. Time after time, the business with Harry gets repeated. I've suggested above that it evokes buried memories from infancy of the attack on the mother's breast, but there's a more general aspect to be considered. As Freud showed, and Norman O. Brown gave a Nietzschean context, material that has been buried or repressed is destined to 'return', over and over. There's an instance in Hitchcock's own *Suspicion* (1941). In that film, Lina marries Johnnie and goes to live with him in a big house in the country, a more modern version of her parents' house. Straight away she's beset by doubts and fears. As I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 7, her condition represents nothing less than what Brown calls universal repression and a consequent universal neurosis with its 'unconscious bent for self-destruction'. Though Lina may in fact come to pride herself on her *responsibility* - as opposed to Johnnie's alleged *irresponsibility* - what always betrays her is her repetition-compulsion whereby nearly every moment of marital crisis is accompanied by memories of the incident on the hillock where Johnnie had first behaved ambiguously towards her.[15]

Following Brown, I consider Lina's repressed and neurotic condition to be a universal one, shared by Hitchcock's audience. Which is why the situation I've just described in *Suspicion* is paradigmatic of nearly all of Hitchcock's American movies. In *Vertigo* (1958), for example, Scottie's pursuit of the 'eternal feminine' in first Madeleine and then Judy is the sign of his neurosis so strongly hinted at in the film's opening scenes. But let's come back to *Harry*. It, too, is full of both repetition and references to time and timelessness, eternity.

The repetition is simply all the business of burying Harry and digging him up again. As for the several references to time, think first of young Arnie. His sense of time is such that yesterday, today, and tomorrow are all one to him - the perfect illustration of psychoanalyst Marie Bonaparte's contention that '[t]he days of the child seem to unfold in some sense outside of our time'.[16] In other words, they correspond to a form of pastoral. Then there's the film's artist-figure, Sam, who makes at least *a play* at sharing Arnie's outlook, by wearing a watch that's broken. Winnicott, a modern-day Romantic, always saw 'play' and imagination as vital components of adult creativity.[17] Brown preferred to cite the mystic Jacob

Boehme (1575-1624) in support of his view that '[e]ternity is the mode of play'.[18] Either way, clearly the Romantic link between child and artist is strong in *Harry*.

In a delightful scene set in the 'Wiggs Emporium', Sam insists on cutting Miss Gravely's hair so that she may look her best for her *rendezvous* with Captain Wiles. 'It will take ten years off your birth certificate', he tells her. He foresees that 'the true Miss Gravely' will be 'timeless with love and understanding'. Sam is never more the artist than when he speaks those words! Sadly, the Captain's remark elsewhere about the 'hasty reverence' with which Harry is buried and unburied would seem closer to describing how the film's characters must actually live their day-to-day lives. And all the while, the local church clock inexorably chimes the passing hours ...

So the situation seems to be this. On the one hand, the film implies the vital roles of both art and love (or 'understanding', as the case may be) in allowing its characters to become again like the child and thereby attain salvation from earthly time. Here we may see the appositeness of the film's epigraph provided, seemingly all unawares, by the myopic Dr Greenbow when he recites from a book the supreme *artist* Shakespeare's declaration that 'Love's not time's fool'. Such a vision, as offered here by *Harry*, implies the escape from history into eternity about which various thinkers have speculated.

On the other hand, that vision contains its built-in ironies. One, as we'll note, involves the true nature of the child, over whom a question-mark must always hover. Another returns us straight away to the real world, where all of us remain repressed: specifically, we're like Scottie in *Vertigo* and like those other city-dwellers characterised by Sam in *Harry* as 'little people ... people with hats on'. Brown sees all of this profoundly when he tells us that '[t]he infantile conflict between actual impotence and dreams of omnipotence is also the basic theme of the universal history of mankind'.[19] There, surely, is the main theme of *Vertigo*. But *Harry* shows us how the same idea has its obverse side, and one which necessarily involves a moral dimension. David Holbrook understands it. Appropriately, he seems to have reached his understanding by observing the young child as it begins to face up to its separateness from the mother. The lesson in hard realism that Holbrook offers is this: 'to become capable of love we must ... relinquish for ever certain desires to be omnipotent, to possess an idealised perfection, and to control what cannot be controlled.'[20] That lesson is one which *Vertigo*'s Scottie learns tragically and too late.

* * *

> *Two elements predominate [in the myth of the golden age]: a lack of ambition and aspiration, which implies a virtuous lack of the avarice and pride which are their source; and a desire for sinless pleasure, which in turn implies a virtuous lack of the passion of lust.*
>
> - Peter V. Marinelli[21]

> *A nice little pastorale.*
>
> - Hitchcock, referring to *The Trouble With Harry*[22]

If you're seeking wisdom, the literary form known as pastoral has much to offer. Imbued with 'the myth of the golden age', the form appeals to humankind's 'universal remembrance of a better time'.[23] Or so Peter Marinelli reports, and he's not alone. Indeed, since the end of World War II, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have been particularly active writing about the nature of pastoral and its associated myths, whose origins go back to ancient Greece.[24]

But that would hardly have been news to Hitchcock. Ever since his first film, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), his work had contained imagery of the garden and of the Lost Paradise. On occasion, as in *The Paradine Case* (1947), a serpent visibly invades the 'garden' (see 'MacGuffin' 12). At other times, the garden is barren to begin with: think of the desolate Cornish vistas we're shown in *Jamaica Inn* (1939), and of the curiously somnolent-looking seacoast that provides the chief setting of *The Birds* (1963). At still other times, the garden has seemed at least initially to be as secure or happy a place as the womb itself, as with the Isle of Man depicted in *The Manxman* (1929), arguably the flashbacks inserted into *The Lodger* (1926) and *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), and the symbolism attaching to Gabriel Valley in *Spellbound* (1945). However, only in *The Trouble With Harry* does the genuine pastoral note dominate for virtually the film's entire length. Blackbirds sing in the opening scene; they continue to sing as the film ends.

Almost everywhere in *Harry*, a benign spirit reigns. The effect is often pleasingly child-like. The scene in which a millionaire arrives to dispense gifts may remind you of the episode in 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' (1886), or any of its film versions, in which young Cedric dispatches the lawyer Mr Havisham back home to New York to grant the wishes of the boy's friends. And what modest requests for gifts the characters in *Harry* make: for Jennifer, fresh strawberries every month; for Arnie, a 'smelly' chemical set; for Mrs Wiggs, a chrome-plated cash register; for Miss Gravely, a hope-chest,

'full of hope'; for Captain Wiles, fresh shirts and a hunting outfit; while for Sam ... a double-bed will do nicely. In every sense, this is a modest and contained world, removed from most of the exigencies of the metropolis. Moreover, in such an Arcadian setting, it's evident that Nature, Art, and even Commerce have just about come to terms. New England is the perfect locale, and you naturally think of Emerson and Thoreau's 'less is more' philosophies.

Mind you, there's another remark of Marinelli's to be considered here: does humankind's first bliss consist in innocence or pleasure?[25] Traditional forms of pastoral allow either. Hitchcock covers himself, in effect, by consistently giving his films trajectories in which 'spiritual' and 'libidinal' seem inextricably linked. Yet let's recall that in *Spellbound*, discussed in 'MacGuffin' 15, his depiction of the Gabriel Valley sequence *had* shown a sophisticated grasp of exactly what's 'recoverable' and what isn't, of where true freedom may be found. The point again is that the matter is both a universal one ('Nature') and one of individual action ('Art'), and that Hitchcock is aware of this. Marinelli speaks of 'pastoral's double concern for the primitive beginnings of the entire race, and with the primitive beginnings in childhood of the individual'.[26] *Harry*, equally, reminds us of what is at stake:

> *Sam: I'll have you know that picture is symbolic of the beginning of the world.*
> *Captain Wiles: That's where I first heard of the world - kindergarten.*

Two different 'gardens' are being evoked, though they may be (to all intents and purposes) one.

Now here's a summary of what's been said so far. Nietzsche may have held up to us an ideal state of unrepressed existence, a kind of 'eternity', but such a vision has in fact been available to humankind since our race began and/or since each individual was conceived and dwelt first in the womb and then at the mother's breast. Artists have presented the vision to us in the form of pastoral and the myth of the golden age. What Nietzsche perhaps never properly faced were the moral issues in the here-and-now which the individual must resolve if he/she is to attain a 'higher innocence' (or 'higher joy'). Indeed, someone like novelist Thomas Wolfe finally repudiated the possibility of our regaining a nirvana-state here on earth: as noted, his last novel was called 'You Can't Go Home Again' In 'MacGuffin' 7, discussing *Suspicion*, I reached a similar conclusion. '[I]t would seem', I wrote, 'that Schopenhauer, Freud and Hitchcock, pessimists all, are united in doubting the *feasibility* of the Superman solution'.[27]

Whatever nirvana we individually and/or collectively achieve is more than likely going to have to be a symbolic one. There's perhaps more room for irony in pastoral and, specifically, *Harry*, than Lesley Brill's 'The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films' allows. Let's now consider Hitchcock's passionate regard for the art of Paul Klee (1879-1940).

* * *

> *My favourite painter is Klee.*
> - Hitchcock[28]

> *[C]hosen are those artists who penetrate to the region of that secret place where primeval power nurtures all evolution. There, where the power-house of all time and space - call it brain or heart of creation - activates every function; who is the artist who would not dwell there?*
> - Paul Klee[29]

In the time he lived abroad, the Swiss painter Klee was in turn associated with the Expressionist *Blaue Reiter* movement and the Bauhaus school of design. He returned to Switzerland in 1933. During his stay at the Bauhaus, he had written a short treatise which Herbert Read would call 'the most profound and illuminating statement [on modern art] ... ever made by a practising artist'.[30] The above quotation referring to the artist's would-be arrival at a 'secret place' comes from it.

Note that Klee associates that secret place with what he calls 'the power-house of all time and space'. His phrasing is very Nietzschean, directly comparable to author John Buchan's in the title of his 1913 novel called 'The Power-House' (immediate predecessor of 'The Thirty-Nine Steps', 1915) - which overtly alludes to Nietzsche in the philosophy of its chief villain, Mr Andrew Lumley, aka Mr Julius Pavia.[31] Elsewhere in Klee's treatise, he says that the artist who penetrates to the secret place succeeds in embracing 'the life force itself', thus transcending 'the oppressively pathetic [crudely imitative] style' and arriving at 'that Romanticism which is one with the universe'.[32]

Klee's words seem to me to show a more profound grasp of the nature of Romanticism than Lesley Brill exhibits in 'The Hitchcock Romance'. (The term 'romance', which Brill borrows from Northrop Frye, is finally too constrictive.)

Crucially, the Romantics had aimed to embrace life on a scale that was entirely new; and Hitchcock, as a 20th-century artist, inherited their disposition twice over, both via his allegiance to the story-telling tradition of Poe and Dickens and via his other allegiance to the outlook and techniques of German Expressionism.

Now, here's the immediate point. Hitchcock owned at least two works by Klee,[33] and for *The Trouble With Harry* he commissioned artist Saul Steinberg (1914-) to design the film's titles-sequence after Klee's *faux-naïf* style. The resulting watercolours and line-drawings, which Brill simply calls in passing 'the Steinberg sketches',[34] add up to one of the most eloquent titles-sequences in Hitchcock. Certainly they constitute one of the most witty and charming.

The drawings are laid out as an extended panorama in a manner that Klee himself often favoured. No doubt the film's use of VistaVision helped suggest the approach. A tracking camera is employed to successively reveal birds in trees, a tall white house, more birds in trees under a sunny sky, and finally a *horizontal* object, a body lying on the ground. Bernard Herrmann's ringing passage for solo horn declares the corpse's presence with finally just the trace of a sour note, a passage that will be employed again in the film proper. On the right of screen, one more bird, but this time a parti-coloured one, helps bridge the sequence to the scenes that follow showing the variegated colours of autumn.

As I say, the sequence imitates the mock-naïve style of Klee. The birds with their stick-legs, and the twiggy trees, could have come from such paintings or drawings by Klee as 'Bird-Garden' (1924) and 'The Steamer Passes the Botanical Gardens' (1921). Together with the drawing of the white house - which in fact resembles the film's church cum schoolhouse - they evoke a childhood world, one more image of the garden like those we've been discussing.

But of course that garden is 'tainted' by the incongruous corpse. So it's interesting to note the different titles-sequence, with its own downbeat note at the end, which John Michael Hayes originally scripted.[35] (Bear in mind, too, as I describe the sequence, what Klee wrote about the neo-Romantic artist who succeeds in embracing 'the life force itself'.) The original sequence was going to show, in speeded-up motion, the growth to maturity of a single maple-leaf, from the merest protuberance of a young bud to a full-blown leaf whose palm would have 'color[ed] down from the scarlet fingers to a paler red, deep orange and into yellow'. Finally, the veins of the leaf would have darkened and stiffened, 'holding the leaf up with Autumn's regal pride before the death of winter'.

As I noted in 'MacGuffin' 15, this is one of several Hitchcock titles-sequences (actual or just mooted) in which the action of the life-force is made visible. But the faintly Walt Disney-ish flavour of this one weighs against it, and it does seem to me to lack the *degree* of vivacity that's in the sequence that was finally laid out by Steinberg.

I've already implied the aptness of the Steinberg sequence. I mean of course its aptness to the film proper. Peter Marinelli might be speaking of either or both of those entities when he says of pastoral that the term 'has come to mean any literature [or art] which deals with the complexities of human life against a background of simplicity'.[36] And he cites poet Robert Frost's 'hard primitivism in New Hampshire ... the pastoral part of Robert Frost', as an example.[37]

Still on the subject of a deceptive simplicity, it's appropriate that we examine next the novel 'The Trouble With Harry' and what Hitchcock found there.

* * *

> *The sureness of fantasy, exactness of writing and casually mortal malice remind one of the early Evelyn Waugh ...*
>
> - 'New Society', on the work of novelist Jack Trevor Story[38]

> *Protestants won't understand that, or Moslems, or Buddhists.*
>
> - Hitchcock, explaining why the premise of *I Confess* (1952) had caused the film's box-office failure.[39]

I once wrote in 'The MacGuffin' that I thought the two best novels filmed by Hitchcock in America were Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca' and Helen Simpson's 'Under Capricorn' (allowing that, strictly speaking, the latter was shot in England). But I'd forgotten how good 'The Trouble With Harry' is. In truth, it's just about perfect, and it deserves all the translations it has ever had. Read it and be joyous! For joy is its prevailing note. In an early chapter, Sam Marlowe's 'strong, virile, baritone voice' is heard singing these proud words from Blake's 'Jerusalem':

> *And did those feet in ancient time*
> *Walk upon England's mountains green ...*

At the end of the novel, Sam is still singing, though this time it's a song of praise to his new-found love, Jennifer. Finally, when the characters have gone back to their homes,

> *the song remained on the heath ... gladdening the hearts of all the little creatures.*

A measure of the novel's quality is the fact that Hitchcock chose to film it almost unchanged, removing just one main character and substituting another; for pages of the novel at a time, the rich comic dialogue and incident are transposed to the screenplay practically intact.

True, 'Jerusalem' becomes 'Flaggin' the Train'. Nonetheless, the essential joyousness of the moment comes across in an inspired passage of cross-cutting which links all the main characters and at least one other: namely, the tramp who, on hearing the song, kicks up his feet - now wearing Harry's shoes - and goes on his way, like a rather more famous tramp before him. So natural-seeming is the passage, which occurs about a quarter of an hour into the film, that you may miss it at a conscious level. But it's there, and it's exactly right.

I've mentioned the tramp for a particular reason. Jack Trevor Story (1917-),[40] the novel's author, displays in much of his work a wealth of reading. In the case of 'Harry', his first published novel, it's apparent that he knew exactly what he was doing when he drew on the pastoral form: *vide* the reference to Blake's 'England's mountains green' and even, on one occasion, a further reference to the tramp's 'mumbling something from Virgil' - no doubt the 'Eclogues' or the 'Georgics'! There's a real cultural mix at work in the novel. I said that the film has removed one of the novel's characters. That character is the libidinous landlord of the local housing-estate, Mark Douglas. We're told that he 'loved anything in skirts that didn't play bagpipes' and that his proclivities had on one memorable occasion sorely offended the late Mr Wiggs, a staunch Catholic. The relevant point here, though, concerns the fact that if Mark Douglas is felt to be the novel's villain, his equivalent in the film is the latter's own creation, Calvin Wiggs (Mr Wiggs's son). Only, in Calvin's case, he's been given something of the puritan upbringing of Mr Wiggs Senior, if one of the connotations of 'Calvin' is any guide.[41] The libidinousness from the novel has been gently re-distributed in the film, but not dropped. As I say, the puritanical Calvin is its villain.

But we were discussing the novel's cultural mix and, at times, cultural *clash*. In the end, such clash is shown to be simply wrong-headed. The novel implies that Harry Worp was a Jew. At least, his son there is called Abie (not Arnie), and clearly Harry's being Jewish would fit his 'outsider' status in the plot. A somewhat comparable reading has in fact been given the *film* by French critic Noël Simsolo ('Hitchcock', 1969), and suggests that the pastel drawing Sam Marlowe makes of Harry's face is like a *Christus* by Georges Rouault (1871-1958). The idea in that case becomes, in Donald Spoto's paraphrase, that *Harry* 'is really a filmed parable on the death and resurrection of Christ, presented ironically'.[42]

Well, maybe. Such a reading would just about accommodate Norman O. Brown's hope that one day *all* humankind will experience 'the resurrection of the body' in an unrepressed state - certainly it fits with Lesley Brill's account of the film overall as being about redemption and resurrection. But the novel and I think the film offer a great deal more than any single connotation. I can hardly stress that enough, given what I see as the filmmaker Hitchcock's cosmopolitan outlook. Now, there's an especially fine chapter in the novel, called "Let's Get This Straight". As in the film, Sam encounters not one but two deaths this day. The first is that of a mother hedgehog (in the film, a rabbit), and here's how the first death affects Sam:

> *Sam turned the hedgehog over gently with his sandal. He heard a tiny commotion in the bracken nearby and he walked across and looked down intently. He saw the baby hedgehogs moving around and crying gently to one another. Sam was filled with a vast and overwhelming sorrow.*

These orphaned baby hedgehogs, gathered up by Sam and passed on to Abie, have their equivalent in the film in the frog which Sam gives to Arnie and about which Jennifer says, 'It's hungry, it needs a mother'.

But when Sam comes on Harry's corpse, the new discovery strikes him as merely a surprise and 'not ... a tragedy, as [finding] the hedgehog had been'. At the same time, 'Sam felt strangely full.' Looking closely at the dead man's face, he receives the inspiration he has been seeking:

> *The dead face of this man held the millions and millions of dead faces of all the centuries. ... The faces of the Jews and the Gentiles, the Romans and the Egyptians and the Greeks. ... [T]he people of every day in every country, all standing looking and not knowing.*

In short, out of his vision of a harsh cosmic destiny or force, Sam is inspired to paint the dead face of every mother's son or daughter. That vision resembles no less a person's than the philosopher Schopenhauer's - and, I think, Hitchcock's.

Just for the moment, you may want to ask 'what price Blake's vision of Jerusalem now?'

* * *

> *In nineteenth-century art, emotion tended to be associated more and more with unworldly and otherworldly attitudes. In his 'World as Will and [Representation]' Schopenhauer made the aesthetic moment of stasis memorable as the prime means by which one could, as it were, stop the world and get off.*
>
> - Marshall McLuhan and Harley Parker[43]

> *It is almost as a reaction to the stress on the aesthetic moment that the Romantics developed a deep concern with the creative process in both art and life.*
>
> - Ibid[44]

But of course art is itself a form of pastoral - paradoxical as that sounds - and one that like a glorious day in Hertfordshire or Vermont may stimulate the partaker to appreciate more, rather than less, of the dark side of life. Blake said, 'I must create a world lest I be enslav'd by another man's'; moreover, he was a pioneer of the mock-naïve style in both painting and in poetry which in his case expressed a profound understanding of the child and its psychology - not to speak of *adult* psychology.

Likewise, a complex understanding of psychology, and how the child may be father to the man, informs Hitchcock's pastoral vision. In 'MacGuffin' 15, I wrote of the flashback in *Spellbound*, '[d]eep down, children are not little angels, but little monsters.' Perhaps I should rather have written that children are both of those things, almost at the same time. Look at how *The Trouble With Harry* depicts young Arnie. Our first glimpse of him shows him to be toting both a space-gun *and* a six-shooter. Later he'll 'swipe' lemonade from his mother, do a sharp bit of trading with Sam (and then complain that Sam got the better of the deal), and con Miss Gravely into parting with not one but two blueberry muffins. All of which merely reflects the larger-scale disposition of his elders, who thereby exhibit what Schopenhauer called the world's amoral Will, or life-force. That's something whose power to motivate our behaviour may leave legislators, and would-be law-enforcers like Calvin Wiggs, floundering ...

Next, notice that ultimately there's no conflict between Schopenhauer's theory of the aesthetic moment and the Romantics' emphasis on the creative process. *Through* creativity an artist like Klee or Hitchcock arrives at that secret place where he can embrace the life-force and contemplate all time and space. Thus he attains a knowledge of what Klee calls 'Genesis eternal'.[45] At the same time, he becomes as the child again, is presumably uncorrupted, and can at last glimpse 'home'. There's further good news. McLuhan and Parker add this crucial observation: 'It remained only to devise means to include the audience in this creative process in order to reach that stage of aesthetics that is familiar in Expressionism and in the speculations of the twentieth century.'[46]

So in Hitchcock's films there's something for everybody. Lesley Brill notes the several Christian allusions in *Harry* but not their obvious complement, allusions to the occult. His excuse might be that finally all other motifs are subordinated to *Harry*'s main theme of 'death's fertility and life's indefatigable rebirth',[47] yet the embracing richness of Hitchcock's conception needs to be seen and appreciated. Captain Wiles is characterised from the outset as someone who takes comfort *wherever* he can find it. Though his mother had always told him that he would 'come to no good', he'd supposed that just satisfying his 'primitive instincts' by taking 'a harmless pot-shot at a rabbit' with his hunting-rifle ('Old Faithful') would be all right. (The rabbit's point-of-view is simply omitted from the Captain's equation.) But things haven't exactly worked out - such is life - and now Harry lies dead in the woods.

The Captain realises that the omens were there from the start. As he tells Sam:

> *First thing I seen, when I rode out this morning, was a double-breasted robin drunk as a hoot-owl from eating fermented choke-cherries. Right away I knew somebody was in trouble. What I didn't know was, it was me.*

As usual, the Captain's point-of-view is strictly his own, and not necessarily that of his fellow-creatures. Harry, for instance, might have put a different interpretation on those same signs. But the Captain's remark has further interest. It

suggests both a primitive belief in portents and a representative instance of what Story's novel calls 'people ... looking and not knowing'.

After setting out, the Captain continues on what, in two senses, is his errant way, his chief article of faith being literally his hunting-rifle. He even indulges in a casual blasphemy or two. Coming on Harry's corpse, he exclaims what sound like the words, 'For rice cape, I've done him in!' Also, here again there's more than likely a self-centred assumption on the Captain's part, comparable to his attributing loyalty to his rifle. And a little later, when nobody seems to be much concerned about Harry's death, the Captain manages to tell himself, 'This could turn out to be the luckiest day of my life!'

However, if the Captain at first disregards his fellow-creatures' points of view, which would suggest that the privileged understanding of the artist has passed him by, that's hardly true of the film itself. The latter is capable of having Arnie say that the 'poor rabbit ... should have carried a four-leaf clover' and Sam to add in double-sympathy, '[a]nd a horse-shoe'. It's significant that the film attributes to 'understanding' the very highest status, on a par with love itself, as when Sam speaks of a transfigured Miss Gravely made 'timeless with love and understanding'. I take 'understanding' to be synonymous with what Schopenhauer calls 'compassion', and akin to what Christians call 'caritas'. At one point, the Captain himself acknowledges Sam-the-artist's understanding, and contrasts it with Calvin Wiggs's *lack* of the same quality.

Round about here we may glimpse how the film equates the characters' amorality with their proneness to superstition - which at the same time represents their incipient readiness to acknowledge in themselves a certain lack. And what they lack is precisely the true religion: infinite love and/or compassion and a grasp of the noumenal. Again this is very Schopenhauerian, though another way of noting the same thing might be to speak of Hitchcock's small-c catholicism.

The occult fails when it leads to a decrease, rather than an increase, in love or understanding. That's the main lesson concerning Harry Worp, after all. On his wedding-night he'd deserted his bride, Jennifer, saying that his horoscope had warned him against starting any new project that day. Commendably, a dismayed Jennifer had packed her bags and gone home to her mother's.

In Hitchcock's films there's something for believers, non-believers, and even sceptics. That's part of the films' universal appeal, not unrelated to their expression of sheer Will. I see much wisdom in Hitchcock's famous remark to 'Movie' (UK), about how 'everything's perverted in a different way'. Other universal matters repeatedly touched on in the films are the dream of a Lost Paradise and the twin subjects of mothers (source of our earliest sense of relationship) and death (where it all ends). Late in *Harry*, a bugle-like sound rings through the night. Miss Gravely is no less superstitious than some of the other characters: she thinks the sound is 'the call of the phantom stagecoach that used to pass by here 200 years ago'. In other words, the sound suggests a traditional emblem of arriving death, as in a famous poem by Massachusetts poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886).[48] However, on this occasion the sound is benign, being made by the horn on the millionaire's car. He has come to buy Sam's paintings. In true Romantic vein, he considers the paintings 'works of genius'. [49]

* * *

> *The primal act of the human ego is a negative one - not to accept reality, specifically the separation of the child's body from the mother's body.*
>
> - Norman O. Brown[50]

> *In a general way, the repressed seeks to 'return' in the present, whether in the form of dreams, symptoms or acting-out: '... a thing which has not been understood inevitably reappears; like an unlaid ghost, it cannot rest until the mystery has been solved and the spell broken'.*
>
> - J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis[51]

The Trouble With Harry contains performances by three fine actresses. Like almost everything else about the film, those performances have much charm. So, too, do the people delivering them. I'm talking here about the importance of casting. Newcomer Shirley MacLaine, as Jennifer, and character actress Mildred Natwick, as Miss Gravely, are impressive in a way I'll have occasion to remark again below. Here, though, let me single out Mildred Dunnock's very special playing as the widowed storekeeper Mrs Wiggs - a character whose name happily repeats that of the eponymous battler in a much-filmed 1901 play. The Mrs Wiggs in *Harry* is herself a battler, though the fact isn't dwelt on. Indeed, the film contains not one but several characters who have known trying times. And if the mother of Calvin Wiggs was probably never a beauty, the essential thing about Dunnock's playing is the fact that she does 'plainness' so well. Clearly it's just

what the script called for. 'Wiggy', as she's known, always wears a grey woollen bonnet and has a laconic New England drawl.[52] My favourite comic moment involving her occurs when she has been roused from her bed by the millionaire's unexpected visit, and appears outside wearing her late husband's dressing-gown plus the ubiquitous grey bonnet.

But I've been centring my remarks about the film's characters on Captain Wiles, whom I've already begun to suggest is *representative*, and I'd like to return to the Captain now. Veteran actor Edmund Gwenn[53] conveys every last implication of the part. Though *Harry*'s characters may well be the amoral, opportunist lot I've called them, the film itself seems to me to have a strong *moral* dimension. And let's not forget that pastoral can be an *ironic* form - in the hands of Theocritus, say, if not Virgil.

To the Captain, then. He's the most haunted of the characters, being repeatedly startled by the closet-door that yawns open at Jennifer's house. The script explains this at one point: '[i]t is almost as if the spirit of Harry Worp had entered the room'. The Captain of course believes in his self-centred way that it was he who killed Harry - but then, so do Miss Gravely and Jennifer each think that *they* killed him! Accordingly, I think the situation is this. The Captain is a representative-figure, and like many such figures in various art forms, he's given pronounced characteristics so that we may spot these and feel their implications. He *represents* something in all of the film's characters and in us, too. For instance, he feels beholden to his mother - yet still fearful of her. It's as if his superstitions all go back to her. In turn, we see how several of the other characters feel beholden to *their* mothers. Jennifer, a mother herself, is such a character. Calvin Wiggs is another. The script reveals that Calvin is paying alimony to an ex-wife,[54] and so we may assume that he's grateful to be back boarding with his mother while he earns money from home by restoring antique cars and being on call as Deputy Sheriff.

Mrs Wiggs is astute in assessing the nature of Calvin's work. She refers to the cars as 'mechanical antiques' and to the Deputy Sheriff's job as 'piece-work'. There's something discontinuous and non-organic about Calvin![55] You'd be forgiven for diagnosing in him a problem connected with his early upbringing and the death of his father.[56] For obviously all those references by the film to mothers and mothering have their point, and as we've begun to see, the nature of child-rearing is an important part of what's involved. Holbrook tells us that the very young child's ambivalent 'love-hate' relation to its mother is centred on the mother's breast, a breast which provides the child with nourishment and its earliest sense of continuity. A sense of continuity is almost as vital for proper growth as nourishment itself. Holbrook sees a symbol for it in D.H. Lawrence's image of the rainbow, and would apply the notion not only to infancy but also to the child's and the adolescent's perception of its parents' togetherness. However, he insists that 'the first five or six years are critical and the first six months are crucial'.[57]

We've also noted already a couple of complicating factors: how the infant soon starts to feel both a rudimentary 'disillusionment' and a rudimentary 'concern', both feelings being related to the alternating presence and absence of the mother. More specifically, in the case of the infant's 'concern' (useful word), this derives in large measure from the infant's own fierce cannibalistic attack on the mother's breast, and its resulting sense that a 'hole' has opened up both in the mother and in itself. Notice how vertiginous that sounds ...[58]

Yet, amazingly, due to an 'amnesia' we all undergo, the first few years of life are generally perceived by us afterwards as having been idyllic. That's an irony which several Hitchcock films exploit. One more irony is this. We can infer that in the normal course of events the young child's relation to its mother is such that it receives at this time the rudiments of a moral sense, something it then carries usefully into later life. By the same token, part of the moral drive in the *adult* is always likely to be an unconscious need to make symbolic 'restitution' to the mother, for reasons I've explained.

Towards the end of *Harry*, Captain Wiles has a little speech: 'If I grumbled too much at my share of the work in burying Harry, I'm sorry. I can see now it was well worth it.' Drawing on what we've been discussing, I want to suggest that the Captain has encountered several basic human situations (which I'll specify) and has been made to literally work his way through them - perhaps thereby becoming emancipated. We're not all so lucky. In the lives of most of us, we can only endlessly re-live such situations in unconscious fantasy-form. That's to say, for us wisdom will consist largely in following a dictum of Robert Frost's, about freedom being just 'feeling easy in one's harness'. Yet *Harry* allows us to have our cake and eat it. As noted, during the film we effectively remain in Arcadia. Meanwhile, like the Captain, we've re-encountered the mother symbolically ('Mother earth'), we've re-experienced the original 'hole' (within and without us), we've made 'restitution' (all that digging), and we've been shown the truly 'ghostly' nature of the whole repetitive 'undertaking' (!).

So the business with the yawning closet-door has had its point. What's concealed behind the door is - nothing.[59] And for those who truly grasp the notion involved, I'd add that Paul Klee was right and all that remains is to embrace the life-force itself. As we know, that's something which is on display in *Harry*, and simultaneously working away in every frame.

The scene in which Captain Wiles first brings Miss Gravely to his cottage called 'The Ship' may be cited here. It begins with one of the film's glorious long-shots, framed by autumn foliage, as the reinvigorated Captain rows his prospective visitor across Farrington's Pond and escorts her up his jetty. 'Come aboard', he invites her. 'Just an old salt's snug anchorage. ... But homely, very homely.'

He's right! The cottage houses a cluttered bachelor's-quarters, and the Dickensian interior - full of ships' relics and antiques - does suggest a homely spirit, albeit with a touch of the fantastical about it. But that figures. For the Captain isn't after all the retired old salt, like Dickens's Captain Cuttle or Lieutenant Tartar, R.N., that he evidently wants Miss Gravely to think. He's but an ex-tugboat-skipper. The scene has a visual gag about that fact which you only pick up on a second or third viewing. On the wall hangs a large photograph of a great ocean liner (the 'Queen Mary'?). But look carefully and you'll also see, in the same picture, hard against one edge, a tugboat attending the liner ...

The Captain's self-centredness provides another visual gag. 'I'm a man who can recognise the human qualities in a woman', he boasts. He's unaware that he's leaning on the red-lacquered figure of a bosomy female, which may once have adorned a ship's prow. You feel that the Captain still has a few nautical miles to go before his words ring true! Meanwhile his superstitious *penchant* for bosomy figures will continue to betray his unconscious attachment to 'Mother'.

Both in this scene and the next, the moral superiority rests with Miss Gravely. The Captain will be fully redeemed only when he confesses the truth about himself at the end of the film. Miss Gravely's own 'confession' comes in the present scene. She owns up to how she fears it was she, and not the Captain, who killed Harry - with the leather heel of her hiking-shoe, after Harry had tried to assault her. As she speaks, a golden, late-afternoon glow suffuses the cottage interior, bonding the newly-intimate pair.

However, there's another, rather shocking, visual gag in the next scene. In the woods, Harry finds himself dug up again. But such is the Captain's sudden 'proprietorial' feeling towards Miss Gravely, that he lets her do much of the work. It's a form of recidivism on his part.[60]

* * *

> *The* bad *man everywhere feels a thick partition between himself and everything outside him. The world to him is an* absolute non-I *and his relation to it is primarily hostile. ... The* good *character, on the other hand, lives in an eternal world that is homogeneous with his own true being. The others are not non-I for him, but an 'I once more'. His fundamental relation to everyone is, therefore, friendly; he feels himself intimately akin to all beings ... .*
>
> - Arthur Schopenhauer[61]

> *I believe in aristocracy, though - if that is the right word, and if a democrat may use it. Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, a few are great names.*
>
> - E.M. Forster[62]

A moment ago, I referred to 'complicating factors' in the young child's relation with the mother. Here's another. Even when it's physically satisfied after a feed, the very intake of nourishment 'will rob the infant of zest for life for a time, and *the infant does not know it will return*'.[63] Holbrook speculates that a buried memory of such occasions may explain why an adult feels 'distress when an urge of desire fails to be satisfied by sexual intercourse, or [why] even that satisfaction is feared which may unconsciously seem to have the power of destroying a zest for life'.[64] However, he adds that '[t]he melancholy of "not knowing the zest will return" is overcome by that mutuality in love which establishes continuity, as by the "quiet" mother, and by a closer approach to reality'.[65]

In another of the scenes set around Harry's makeshift grave, Captain Wiles echoes Holbrook. Overcoming on this occasion his reluctance to exert himself, the Captain bangs down the freshly-dug earth with the back of a shovel, and remarks that 'love adds zest to your work, Sammy boy'. Now notice the film's happy conjunction of events. The action of successively burying and unburying Harry, an action in which all the main characters participate, comes to have a therapeutic effect vis-à-vis *buried* memories of harm done to 'Mother', as well as memories of her loving forgiveness

which had helped to make all well again. (Crucially, she had always come back ...) It's the action of the digging - perhaps a crude echo of the original 'attack' on the mother - which both indulges the repetition-compulsion and may finally neutralise the repressed memories associated with it. Harry is just the 'excuse' for the digging, the MacGuffin. Meanwhile, this remarkable day has seen two pairs of lovers (Sam and Jennifer, Captain Wiles and Miss Gravely) meet and become engaged, and now they seem destined for joy. With their new lease of life and zest, anything seems possible. Sam even envisages a marriage which will truly bestow freedom, though Jennifer feels that he must be 'practically unique, then'.

Here's a further happy thought. If 'Mother earth' represents the mother's body, then the landscape itself may speak of the cycle of the seasons and of the sense of continuity associated with parental love. As noted, D. H. Lawrence's symbol for that parental love was the overarching rainbow. In *Harry*, the autumn colours of Vermont provide an equally benign equivalent. But it isn't, perhaps, the only one. Very often in Hitchcock, a quite minor character unwittingly acts as a *deus ex machina*; I think Herb in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) is such a person. Likewise, at the end of *Harry*, Dr Greenbow brings 'release' for the main characters when he pronounces that Harry's death had been from a heart seizure. In the doctor's case, both his noble profession and his reading-acquaintance with Shakespeare might seem to qualify him for a providential function. But I don't think either of those things matters here. It's the doctor's resonating name - Greenbow - which best signals the sort of symbolic freedom he finally bestows, albeit he himself remains oblivious of his surrogate *father's* role (as you could call it) ...

Holbrook takes pains to remind his readers of how wisdom and a sense of Nature's continuity go together. He stresses that much of the art of living is bound up with one's learning to accept the 'in-between' times, knowing that the 'good times' will return. A mature person sees and can accept general human imperfection, both in the short term and in the long term. By the same token, that person sees how particular projects may be fulfilled in the course of one or more generations, and so learns to be patient. The attaining of such wisdom often indicates that the person has arrived at a state of goodness, where egotism has been abandoned in favour of a more selfless kind of love - love of a parental kind, for instance.

At least twice in *Harry*, we're reminded of how after autumn comes winter - and, the implied corollary, after winter comes spring. The Captain says that it's no use trying to submerge Harry's body in the pond. Not only may it soon pop up again, but, besides, 'they'll be cutting ice there next winter ...'. And above the mantelpiece in Jennifer's cottage, framed by vases of autumn leaves, hangs a painting of a snow-scene. The idea, surely, is that one season implies the other, and that the characters see no incongruity in this.

Now, as Holbrook demonstrates of 'The Winter's Tale' (c. 1611), in Shakespeare's plays certain characters constitute 'the forces for good'. They await, often in exile, the time when a better, more benevolent régime will rule, or the present régime will have a change of heart. A variant on the same idea occurs in the mature works of Dickens. In 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864), in a sort of mini-pastoral, the good characters assemble by a paper-mill near the headwaters of the Thames. And in 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' (1870), the corresponding set of characters come together for regular meetings in what they call 'bean-stalk country', Lieutenant's Tartar's ship-shape rooms in London, full of souvenirs of his travels. The very quaintness of the locale, and its fanciful name, suggests that the defeat of evil is seen by the characters as being far from inevitable. For the present, they will simply provide themselves with a haven.[66]

In *Harry*, too, the main characters constitute 'the forces for good'. Whatever their foibles, they are *felt* by the viewer to be thoroughly decent and likeable people. One clue to the fact of their goodness is the sheer speed with which they draw together in mutual helpfulness, especially in the several scenes set in Jennifer's cottage. Another is their own expressed understanding of what - apart from Harry - brings them together:

> *Captain Wiles: Oh [Miss Gravely's] a very nice lady, Sam, very nice.*
> *Sam: We're all nice. I don't see how anyone could help but like us today.*
> *Captain Wiles: That's just how I feel today.*

In short, these are people who belong to E.M. Forster's 'aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky'. Forster, indeed, might have been anticipating the spirit of *Harry* when he added that he was against ascetism ('I am with the old Scotsman who wanted less chastity and more delicacy') because after all our bodies 'are the instruments through which we register and enjoy the world'. Yet he felt this wasn't a major point. 'It is clearly possible to be sensitive, considerate and plucky and yet be an ascetic too ...'.[67]

Exactly. It isn't Calvin Wigg's puritanism *per se* which makes him the 'villain' of Hitchcock's film. It's rather his narrow, suspicious, and purely 'mechanical' grasp of things. What he lacks is 'understanding', i.e. compassion, which that most universal of philosophers, Schopenhauer, tells us has the power to dissolve the veil of Maya (Hindu for 'illusion')

and grant us a glimpse of nirvana. As I wrote in 'MacGuffin' 8, that veil is scarcely dissolved or rent in *Torn Curtain* (1966). But in *Harry*, it is dissolved - at least for a time.

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Notes

1. Norman O.Brown, 'Life Against Death' (Sphere Books, 1968), pp. 254-55. (Brown's book was first published in 1959.)

2. The film was the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Draft versions of the screenplay were called 'Into Thin Air'. Of course, a Hitchcock film had *already* been named after some lines from 'The Tempest', viz. *Rich and Strange* (1932).

3. Much of my information about Winnicott, the English psychoanalyst and paediatrician, comes from David Holbrook, 'The Quest For Love' (1964). Holbrook discusses the 'transitional object' on pp. 58-59.

4. Raymond Durgnat's ultimately unsatisfying book on Hitchcock, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (1974), suggests on p. 36: '[Hitchcock] catches us in that semi-serious, semi-infantile area where we accept innocent and wicked as real moral states, and then insists that we grow up, a little.' While there's indeed some truth in this notion of how a Hitchcock film toys with its audience, there's also rather more to the matter than Durgnat allows ...

5. Holbrook, p. 79.

6. Lesley Brill, 'The Hitchcock Romance' (1988), pp. 283-91, passim. These pages constitute the book's closing chapter, on *Harry*. It suggests at one point: '[u]rgency would be misplaced in this film, for resurrection may be safely assumed. Death passes and life renews without effort or anxiety.' (pp. 283-84)

7. François Truffaut, 'Hitchcock' (1967), pp. 99-100. *North by Northwest* is, of course, designedly almost as full of 'holes' as a Gruyère cheese: see, for example, a couple of notes to that effect on the 'MacGuffin' Web site. Think too of *Notorious* (1946). The MacGuffin there is the uranium ore hidden in the champagne bottles in Alex Sebastian's cellar: the womb-like cellar, and the very connotations of champagne, are both apt.

Concerning the psychoanalytical referents for 'nothing' and 'holes', here are some variants. Norman O. Brown, p. 237, speaks of how 'Adam never really fell ... the primal crime is an infantile fantasy, created out of nothing by the infantile ego in order to sequester by repression its own unmanageable vitality (id)'. And Anthony Wilden paraphrases Jacques Lacan: '*we are condemned to desire a desire* [of the Other], which is like trying to find a hole to fill up a hole'. See Anthony Wilden, "Libido as Language: Jacques Lacan's Structuralism", in 'Psychology Today', May 1972, p. 86.

8. Holbrook spends much time on this idea. Following Winnicott, et al., he stresses the importance of 'good mothering' whereby the infant finds its behaviour understood and tolerated. In later life, such a person feels only 'true guilt' (as opposed to 'implanted guilt'), and the urge to make reparation can become a positive and creative urge. Holbrook therefore concludes by quoting the medieval carol: 'Blessèd be the time that apple taken was!' (pp. 80-81). On that last matter, see note 58 below.

9. Compare Holbrook, p. 53, where he quotes Mrs Len Chaloner.

10. 'Bleak House' (1853) and 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864) - both of which, incidentally, Hitchcock had studied at school.

11. Brown, pp. 88-89.

12. In Episode 2 of the fascinating TV series, 'The Private Life of Plants', Sir David Attenborough notes that the reason why the maples and aspens of New England and the Appalachians glow with colour in autumn is that the trees have started to 'shut down' for the winter. With the withdrawal of chlorophyll from the leaves, their accumulated waste-matter is revealed. (Elsewhere I've read that the soil of New England is a factor here.)

13. Donald Richie, 'Ozu: His Life and Films' (1974), p. 52. On a related matter, I almost wholly agree with Thomas M. Leitch - indeed had noticed this myself - when he writes of the use of transitional extreme-long-shots in *Harry*: '[t]hese shots, which are unique in Hitchcock's films, are reminiscent of what Noël Burch has called the "pillow shots" of Yasujiro Ozu: they break the action into episodes and simultaneously provide a sense of the primacy of the non-human environment,

so that human action itself is perceived as having an eruptive force.' ('Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games', 1991, p. 183) Where I perhaps don't quite agree with Leitch concerns his claim that such shots are unique in Hitchcock's films. Some sequences in *The Manxman* (1929) start in very similar manner.

14. Donald Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 356, notes as follows: 'the director was delighted that the music [in *Harry*] never intruded upon the sound of the body being dragged over dry ground, the "little noiseless noise among the leaves" that recalled Keats and, now, Hitchcock'. Spoto here is quoting a passage from Keats's 'I stood tip-toe' - though Massachusetts poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) might also have been cited. In a letter to a 'Friend', she wrote of 'a noiseless noise in the orchard that I let persons hear' ...

15. 'MacGuffin' 7, pp. 11-22, passim. See especially p. 12 and p. 20 (n7), and compare Brown, Chapter VIII ("Death, Time, and Eternity").

16. Quoted in Brown, p. 90. In the film, even Sam is bamboozled by Arnie's peculiar sense of time.

17. 'Throughout his life, Winnicott believed "creativity" gave a person's life meaning. The use of "play" with adults, that is playing with ideas, and imagination add to one's creativity. He also wrote of destruction as linked to creativity. For example, a child builds some blocks, destroys them, and then creates a new form. This happens throughout one's life; the rhythm of destruction-creation.' The passage just quoted comes from text posted on the World Wide Web by the Lifschitz Psychology Museum, to accompany an exhibit curated by Marvin Lifschitz, Ph.D.

18. Brown, p. 91.

19. Brown, p. 34.

20. Holbrook, p. 72.

21. Peter V. Marinelli, 'Pastoral' (1971), p. 15.

22. I've always remembered Hitchcock saying this. It was perhaps in a broadcast for the BBC in the 1960s or 1970s, called "The Time of Your Life". The 'pastorale' Hitchcock had in mind could easily have been a musical or a painted one.

23. Marinelli, p. 15.

24. I hear that Professor Paul Alpers, who teaches English and Comparative Literature at Berkeley, has 'What Is Pastoral?' forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. I also hear that he and Berkeley's Vice Chancellor, Professor Carol Christ, are jointly conducting a short course on 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' as part of English 24. Lucky Berkeley students!

25. Compare Marinelli, p. 21.

26. Marinelli, p. 20.

27. 'MacGuffin' 7, p. 13.

28. Charles Thomas Samuels, 'Encountering Directors' (1972), p. 239. Compare John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch' (1978), p. 142.

29. Paul Klee, 'Paul Klee on Modern Art' (Faber paper covered edition, 1966), p. 49. (Klee's treatise was written in 1924 and its English translation was first published in 1948.)

30. Klee, p. 5.

31. Both Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's reputations in Britain peaked towards the end of the 19th century and in the early part of the 20th. In Schopenhauer's case, the famous 'Westminster Review' had promoted his work, which no doubt helps to explain why such outstanding writers as Hardy and Conrad fell under his influence. Meanwhile, a leading champion of Nietzsche in Britain was George Bernard Shaw, whose play 'Man and Superman' was first published in 1903. Hitchcock would later own an autographed copy. However, Hitchcock also greatly admired the novels of John Buchan (1875-1940)

and the stories and novels of G.K. Chesterton (1874-1836). Both of those writers expressed ambivalent feelings about the Superman concept; for example, Chesterton's novel 'The Man Who Was Thursday' (1908) makes its head villain a super-man figure (see, for instance, Chapter VI). In some ways, too, 'The Man Who Was Thursday' critiques the gloom and pessimism of Conrad's 'The Secret Agent', which had just come out. Chesterton afterwards stated his aim: '[My novel] was intended to describe the world of wild doubt and despair which the pessimists were generally describing at that date; with just a gleam of hope in some double meaning of the doubt, which even the pessimists felt in some fitful fashion.' (Letter by Chesterton to the 'Illustrated London News', 13 June 1936)

32. Klee, p. 43.

33. George Perry, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1965), p. 156.

34. Brill, p. 285. In fairness to Brill, it should be noted that his previous sentence has referred to '[t]he primitive drawings accompanying the titles ... composed of childlike, mostly natural, images.'

35. The unpublished Paramount Studios screenplay I am drawing on here is dated '9-20-54'.

36. Marinelli, p. 3.

37. Marinelli, pp. 3-4. The author says that in this modern instance of pastoral 'we have exchanged the soft primitivism of Arcadia for a hard primitivism in New Hampshire'. I'll have occasion to refer again to Robert Frost (1874-1963) in the main text.

38. Quoted on the back cover of a 1989 paperback edition of three of Story's novels comprising the 'Alfred Argyle Trilogy'.

39. Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, 'The Celluloid Muse' (1969), p. 96.

40. Story, who from a 1960s photograph looks to have been a dead-ringer for Frank Sinatra, had his share of eccentricities. For a while, he lived with a poodle in the Hertfordshire woods, where 'Harry' is set. Yet he also seems to have been quite a lad, was married at least twice, and had eight children. One of his most successful fictional creations is the character named Alfred Argyle, a provincial foot-in-the-door salesman whose sometimes scabrous escapades are told in a crackling trilogy of novels. These have been highly praised by the English reviewers, though regrettably they don't seem to have proved 'exportable' in the way that 'Harry' was.

41. 'Calvin' of course also reminds you of Vermont's most famous son, Republican President Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933). And that's fitting, when you remember that Vermont has traditionally been a very conservative state, perhaps most notably in its opposition to any form of Federal intervention in its internal affairs. *All* the main characters in *Harry* display something of that stubborn independence.

42. Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992), p. 238. Spoto isn't enthusiastic about such a reading; no more am I. See main text.

43. Marshall McLuhan and Harley Parker, 'Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting' (1968), p. 22.

44. McLuhan and Parker, p. 23.

45. Klee, p. 45.

46. McLuhan and Parker, p. 23.

47. Brill, p. 288. When I so enthusiastically reviewed Brill's book in 'MacGuffin' 2, I nonetheless felt constrained to add that the book also seemed to me in a way wishful and distorted. I see little reason to change that view now. For one thing, to say, as Brill does, that Hitchcock really 'meant' *Harry* - that it represents his own 'dream' of 'a life in which human beings are complete and fulfilled', while in films like *Vertigo* and *Psycho* he was being mainly 'ironic' - looks a little pat. As noted, irony is itself a permissible part of the pastoral mode in which *Harry* operates. In the text, I give instances of such irony in the film.

Further, reviewing Brill's book, I likened *Harry* to the country scenes in Dickens's 'Pickwick Papers' (1837) considered in relation to the rest of that tale, filled with law courts, prisons, and genuinely ironic (or life-like) misunderstandings. My point was that Dickens threw himself with equal zest into narrating both aspects of his tale. As many of his contemporaries remarked, Dickens was *fundamentally* a man bursting with life and energy, who took inspiration where he found it.

Hitchcock, too, always understood how life has two sides - light and dark. And not only are the two sides bound up with each other, but the one can become the other in an instant. (Why do I think of the man cited in *The Birds* who had jumped up and shot his wife because she had changed channels on the TV set while he was watching it?) In note 60 below, I remark how Hitchcock manages to imply that even gentle Miss Gravely may become murderous.

Also, the reader may gather from the text that I simply don't agree with Brill when he claims (on p. 290 of his book) that *Harry* totally excludes destruction from its world.

In sum, I think this. Naturally Hitchcock sometimes dreamt of a trouble-free existence, of 'a clear horizon' as he himself put the matter. Most of us have such a dream. Nor do I doubt that Hitchcock's childhood and young manhood were comparatively, even richly, happy. But I also believe that it was only when Hitchcock's art and other factors brought him into contact with the very well-springs of the life-force, and that force began to flow increasingly freely in his work, that his art acquired the truly rich and *universal* expression that *Harry* manifests in every frame.

To claim for *Harry* that it was especially 'meant' by Hitchcock seems to me to be - as they say in *Sabotage* (1936) - a moot point. Nonetheless, I think that Brill and I differ only on matters of emphasis.

48. The poem is the one beginning 'Because I could not stop for Death ...'. Film buffs will naturally also think of Victor Sjöstrom's famous film called *The Phantom Carriage* (1921).

49. Genius and the nature of genius were preoccupations of the Romantics. Schopenhauer had some excellent thoughts on the topic, as I noted when analysing *Psycho* in 'MacGuffin' 4.

50. Brown, p. 145.

51. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, 'The Language of Psychoanalysis' (1988), pp. 78-79.

52. I fancy I heard Ellen Burstyn 'echo' that drawl recently in a television clip from the film *The Spitfire Grill*, which is set in Maine.

53. My copy of Shaw's 'Man and Superman' lists Edmund Gwenn (1877-1959) as a member of the original cast when the play opened at the Court Theatre, London, in 1905. Before *Harry*, Gwenn had appeared in three Hitchcock movies: *The Skin Game* (1931), *Waltzes From Vienna* (1933), and *Foreign Correspondent* (1940). He won an Oscar in 1947 as Best Supporting Actor with his Kris Kringle in George Seaton's *Miracle on 34th Street*. His brother was Arthur Chesney, who played the father in Hitchcock's *The Lodger* (1926). Gwenn himself appears to have played that role in a radio production by Hitchcock in 1940. (My thanks to Martin Grams Jnr for that last piece of information.)

54. I thank Steven DeRosa for reminding me of this particular detail, which is mentioned in the screenplay's dialogue but was omitted from the finished film.

55. Hitchcock's characterisation of Calvin here reminds me of how Dickens characterised at least two of *his* villains: Bradley Headstone in 'Our Mutual Friend' and John Jasper in 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' (1870). Headstone, who 'could do mental arithmetic mechanically, sing at sight mechanically, ... even play the great church organ mechanically' (Book the Second, Ch. 1), foreshadows the cathedral organist Jasper. Of the latter, Dickens writes: 'Constantly exercising an Art which brought him into mechanical harmony with others, and which could not have been pursued unless he and they had been in the nicest mechanical relations and unison, it is curious to consider that the spirit of the man was in moral accordance or interchange with nothing around him.' (Ch. XXIII) Compare next note.

56. Here I think of how Hitchcock characterises Covent Garden greengrocer - and murderer - Bob Rusk in *Frenzy* (1972). Rusk and his mother are both redheads, as we learn from a memorable shot in which together they lean over a window-box full of red geraniums to talk to Dick Blaney in the street below. Rusk introduces his mother as coming from 'Kent, the garden of England' - and you sense how his own present relation to the remembered 'garden' of his childhood has become merely parodic and mechanical. You also sense the absence of a strong father in his upbringing ...

57. Holbrook, p. 16.

58. Holbrook, pp. 48-49, links the Biblical Fall with our memories of the womb, 'a closed circle (as of a garden) on which no environment impinged'. He adds that 'the baby's fear of falling is one of its greatest, after the surrounding confinement of the womb is left behind'. Then he adds: 'The symbol of ... the Fall, or its focus, is the "apple" of knowledge of good and evil. That this [in turn] is the symbol of the mother's breast is born out by the way ... many artists who have illustrated the myth ... have made Eve hold the apple in one hand and her breast in the other.' So there you have suggestive associations for Hitchcock's symbolism as deployed in *Harry*, *Vertigo*, and *Frenzy*. In a footnote on p. 48, Holbrook adds a further association by referring to how a child's first 'ideogram' in painting is a circle or spiral, which Holbrook suggests represents the enclosed 'self' ...

59. Compare an identical motif, and outcome, in 'A Dream Play' by the great Expressionist playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912). Influences on Strindberg included Hindu and Buddhist thought, probably Schopenhauer and certainly Nietzsche, and the mystical writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Two of his favourite authors were Poe and Dickens.

60. Still, there's at least one joking (?) suggestion by the script about who may have the last laugh. Miss Gravely keeps a stock of elderberry wine. Perhaps she's seen Frank Capra's 1941 film, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and knows to what sinister use that particular beverage may be put. Perhaps, too - her first name being Ivy - she has read Mrs Marie Belloc Lowndes's famous 1927 novel, or seen Sam Wood's 1947 film version, called '[The Story of] Ivy', and recalls that there also the woman poisons her husband. (In that case, Miss Gravely's first name would become as funereal-sounding as her surname.)

61. Arthur Schopenhauer, 'On the Basis of Morality' (1841; 1965), quoted in Christopher Janaway, 'Schopenhauer' (1994), pp. 82-83.

62. E.M. Forster, "What I Believe", in the collection by the author, 'Two Cheers for Democracy' (Penguin Books edition, 1965), p. 81.

63. Holbrook, p. 78.

64. Holbrook, p. 78.

65. Holbrook, p. 79. Hitchcock himself claimed in 1971 that he'd been lucky enough to have a very placid mother. See 'MacGuffin' 19, p. 19.

66. However, Dickens does imply the necessity and even advisability of encountering evil in day-to-day life. Such regulated commerce with evil may in fact be the best form of inoculation against it.

67. Forster, p. 81.

San Francisco: Places to Visit

Internet-user Walter Ulrich recently posted on the <alt.movies.hitchcock> newsgroup site the following 'addresses' of locations from *Vertigo* .

Madeleine's apartment: The Brocklebank, 1000 Mason Steet.
Scottie's apartment: 900 Lombard Street, at Jones.
Judy's hotel: The Empire Hotel, now the York, 940 Sutter Street.
Ernie's, now the Essex Supper Club, 847 Montgomery Street.
Palace of the Legion of Honor: Lincoln Park/ 34th Street.
The Old Fort (looking north at the Golden Gate Bridge): off Lincoln Blvd in the Presidio.
The Redwood Forest: Muir Woods, 13 miles north of San Francisco (take the Mount Tamalpais exit off U.S. 101. [But see bulleted note below.]
The 'Church Tower': Mission San Juan Bautista, 90 miles south of San Francisco (take 101 to California 156 east - between San Jose and Salinas). (Note: there is no tower, it was added by special effects.)

- A contributor to Andrew Morrison's *Vertigo* Web Page claims that 'Muir Woods' in Hitchcock's film is in fact Big Basin State Park, southwest of the city of San Jose.

Coming Attractions

Rich and Strange; the sources of *Rear Window*; book reviews (incl. 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' - plus an interview with its editor, Professor Sidney Gottlieb). And the usual features, incl. 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted.

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Some past 'MacGuffins' have featured *The Wrong Man* (issue 20), *Vertigo* (17, 11, 1), *Foreign Correspondent* (16), *Spellbound* (15), Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14), *Young and Innocent* (13), *The Paradine Case* (12), *Notorious* (10), *The Lady Vanishes* (9), and *Torn Curtain* (8). These are the issues most recommended.

ODD SPOT: NOTHING NEW IN THE DARK

Virtual reality has a long history.

In 1781 De Loutherbourg, the theatrical scene painter, exhibited in London 'Various Imitations of Natural Phenomena, Represented by Moving Pictures'. His panorama-device caused a sensation. The painter Gainsborough made one for himself capable of showing sunrise and moonrise as well as storms and ships at sea.

The Victorians replaced the 'Eidophusikon' with the more static - but more elaborate - 'cyclorama', which was soon being built everywhere. Melbourne, Australia, had at least two. One depicted the Battle of Waterloo, the other the siege of Paris in 1861. To enhance the *trompe l'oeil* effect, awestruck patrons viewed the real objects and painted canvas through binoculars.

Alfred Hitchcock recalled something similar from about 1910. 'Hale's Tours' in London consisted of a room set up as a railway coach and a view of an exotic locale, such as the Swiss Alps, projected onto a screen at one end.

Now someone has suggested that the origins of horror movies go back still further than all of this. In his 'Book of Firsts', Melvin Harris cites a presentation of animated lantern slides which took place in London in 1710. It fascinated audiences by showing a 'lively cockroach which jumped into the mouth of a sleeping man'.

'The MacGuffin' is indexed in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 22 | May-August 1997 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

MY DEEP THANKS TO Sidney Gottlieb for the interview - conducted by email - which he so kindly consented to give us for this issue. Professor Gottlieb's splendid collection of Hitchcock's published articles and interviews, 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', will appear in paperback this (northern) Fall. Besides the interview, we print here a review of the book itself.

It seems appropriate, continuing incidentally what is becoming a regular feature, that we also include here a little-known early piece about Hitchcock himself and his films, this time a piece which first appeared in 1936. Prominent British film journalist of her day, Caroline Lejeune, interviews Hitch - and reveals that he was an expert 'forger' of other people's signatures!

The Hitchcock film to receive special analysis in this issue is one of the director's personal favourites, *Rich and Strange* (1932). I comment in our article on a touching shipboard scene between Emily (Joan Barry) and Commander Gordon (Percy Marmont) in which she first calls him 'Gordon'. She explains that 'the "Mister" got lost out here', and he responds by saying, 'Yes, I'm glad.' But I haven't been able to work out what he says next, and am hoping that someone can enlighten me. I'll try to make it worth your while!

Incidentally, as a glance at our 'Bloopers' section in this issue will show, my ears have played tricks with me at least a couple of times lately. I apologise for that!

Here's special thanks to Evan Williams for his two contributions this issue. Evan is one of three top Australian film critics (*the* three top Australian film critics?) who have each sent us their personal 'best films of 1996' list for our annual feature. Evan, in addition, has written for us a fascinating short review of the recent documentary about Leon Theremin, the inventor of the electronic musical instrument that bears his name and which is heard so memorably in Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945).

'Oz-Report' this time is written by Freda Freiberg, a Melbourne authority on film and still-photography and their associated cultural issues. Freda is not as enraptured by the Australian film *Shine* (d. Scott Hicks) as some local and overseas critics seem to have been ...

My very warm thanks, too, to the 'letter-writers' whose work (some of it in fact received by email) is included this time. In addition, I would single out for thanks such people as Leslie Shepard, Dan Auiler, Lary Kuhns, and Philip Kemp, for information they provided and which is drawn on here.

Finally, here's an interesting thing. Author and screenwriter Talmage Powell tells us that the title of his original short story which he adapted for 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' into the episode called "No Pain", starring Brian Keith, was something quite different - 'Pigeon in an Iron Lung'. The episode-title, it appears, was provided by either the series' producer, Joan Harrison, or the episode's director, Norman Lloyd. What's interesting about that is the fact that in this case the phrase 'no pain' was almost certainly drawn from the famous poem by John Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale' - which previous issues of 'The MacGuffin' have remarked to be an influence on both the title of an early draft of *Vertigo* ('Listen Darkling') and the climax Hitchcock intended for *Suspicion* (cf. Keats's 'To cease upon the midnight with no pain'). So definitely, I'd say, a Keats influence was 'in the air' around the Hitchcock camp ...

To everyone, good viewing.

P.S. This 'MacGuffin' includes a table of contents for issues 17-20.

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Complete retrospective of Hitchcock's TV work
Some rare items will screen at the Museum of Television & Radio in Beverly Hills during its season called "Murder in the Living Room: Hitchcock by Hitchcock", to run from June 13 to September 28.

For almost the first time in 37 years, 'Incident at a Corner' is being shown. Made in colour by Hitchcock for 'Ford Startime' in 1960, this 50-minute program stars Vera Miles and George Peppard. Miles, following her performance the same year in *Psycho*, here plays the daughter of a man falsely accused of a crime involving some schoolgirls.

The MTR's program notes mention Miles's earlier falling out with Hitchcock after she became pregnant and turned down the female lead in *Vertigo*. Hitchcock had first seen her in black and white on television, in a potboiler called 'The House Where Time Stopped' - which opens the MTR season. Some of his original fascination with Miles seems reflected in the character eventually played in *Vertigo* by Kim Novak. As the MTR program notes imply, the character's grey suit - which Hitchcock insisted on - hints at the director's first vision of Miles in black and white.

Closing this season of all the nearly 20 shows Hitchcock directed for television will be the 50-minute episode of 'Alcoa Premiere' called 'The Jail', for which Hitchcock was actually just executive producer (the director was Norman Lloyd). But it was a notable episode - harrowing sci-fi script by Ray Bradbury, John Gavin as star - and apart from Hitchcock's own series which continued for another three years, this 1962 television program would be the last to which he would put his name.

• Our California readers wanting more details of the season can phone the MTR on (310) 786-1000.

'Restored' *Vertigo* now available on video and laserdisc
A feature of the laserdisc of *Vertigo* is the inclusion on it of the so-called Foreign Censorship Ending, reporting the arrest of Gavin Elster. That description seems to be something of a misnomer, though, because the scene, part of the Samuel Taylor script almost from the beginning, was written and filmed in response to *American* censorship requests.

The laserdisc has an excellent commentary, on its second audio channel, by the film's associate producer Herbert Coleman. The printed notes included with the laserdisc are also informative. Something we appreciated was the description of Madeleine (Kim Novak) as 'a modern "Bridey Murphy"', thus perhaps invoking the British film *The Search for Bridey Murphy* (Noel Langley, 1956) which had recently helped fuel popular discussion around the world (including in Australia) about reincarnation ...

The lesson of Oscar
Actor-author Simon Callow, who has written splendid biographies of Charles Laughton and Orson Welles, recently opened at the Savoy Theatre, London, in his one-man show 'The Importance of Being Oscar' (originally a vehicle for Michael MacLiammoir). At least two films about Oscar Wilde are coming soon, and this year marks the centenary of Wilde's release from jail after he was convicted on charges relating to his homosexuality.

According to Hitchcock-biographer Donald Spoto, Hitchcock read Wilde's novel 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1890) 'several times' as a young man. Not only do such Hitchcock films as *Saboteur* (1942) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) 'borrow' dialogue from Wilde, but Hitchcock's flair for self-publicity and showmanship likewise seem to show the flamboyant Irishman's influence. Consider this latest description of 'the divine Oscar' by Bryan Appleyard:

> *He treated his life and personality as a work of art, pursuing fame and publicity as no artist had done before. He championed the distinctly modern cause of the artist as outrageous game player and manipulator of expectations.*

We might challenge that 'as no other artist had done before' bit - Charles Dickens was no slouch at self-promotion - but nonetheless happily rest our case ...

More on videos, CD-ROMs

'MacGuffin' reader Bruce Christopher recently reported via the <alt.movies.hitchcock> newsgroup on the Internet that Kino Video's release of *Jamaica Inn* (1939) represents 'a vast improvement over previously available video editions'. Mastered from a 35mm archive print, it runs four minutes longer than those other video versions. Price in the US is $24.95 (as of February 1997). However, there's no word yet of a release on PAL (European)-format video.

Following our mention last time of the limited sales so far of 'The *Rebecca* Project' on CD-ROM, we note that this detailed study of Hitchcock's film, including feminist perspectives, has been picked up for distribution by the British Film Institute. It's still only compatible with Macintosh computers, though. Sales outlet in Australia is Peribo Books, 58 Beaumont Road, Mt Kuring-gai, NSW 2080.

For our Australian readers, too, we can recommend the quality of several early British Hitchcock films on video - titles include *Easy Virtue*, *The Ring*, *The Farmer's Wife*, *Rich and Strange* - available from Movie Boulevard, P.O. Box 1130, St Kilda South, Victoria 3182. Telephone (03) 9534 7911. The videos come from the Aikman Archive and sell for $29.95, plus $5 for postage and handling of your order.

For Mensans

The new movie *Contact* (d. Robert Zemeckis), based on the novel by Carl Sagan, has Jodie Foster playing a free-thinking radio astronomer - and Mensa member - who discovers an intelligent signal coming from deep space. Watch for Jodie's Mensa sweatshirt and keychain!

LETTERS

Vertigo

Ulrich Ruedel, Ann Arbor, Michigan. USA

I think Messrs Harris and Katz did a very good job of adding 'authentic' foleys to the restored *Vertigo*, with the exception of the details mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 21. (Incidentally, I wonder why people mention they're upset by those 'seagull' sound-effects yet no-one mentions the bird-song heard during the originally dialogue-only scenes at the mission and in Muir Woods. That, and the amplified and too-directional tram sound-effects when Scottie and Midge leave the book store were the most objectionable effects for me.)

The remix is wonderful, and it would be *completely* unobjectionable had they gotten those few differences right and/or included the original mono soundtrack on the laserdisc. (Yes, I know there wasn't any further track available, due to DTS on the one analog channel and the - excellent - audio commentary on the other.)

Also, the final scenes at the tower look okay now. Harris says that the material had deteriorated so much that it looked flat in the 70mm prints, but they increased the contrast electronically for the video transfer. And I don't doubt, as some critics did, that those scenes were indeed always intended to be that dark. Harris and Katz refer to both Hitch's notes and the original technicolour prints - and they have the assistant producer [Herbert Coleman] on the audio commentary to prove their point, too.

Basically, I admire the work Harris and Katz have done. The picture looks *marvellous*, the colours and textures are incredible, and the deterioration at the end is hardly noticeable anymore on the laserdisc. The soundtrack in general sounds much fuller and in parts more subtle than the original (or what was left of it).

[Editor's note. Excellent points, Ulrich. Nonetheless, in Melbourne, Australia, some of us are lucky enough to have access to an undeteriorated original IB Tech print of *Vertigo*, and we can only regret the 'corrupted text' that *Vertigo* has now become. Scholars are going to have to mentally 'undo' the changes for perhaps ever afterwards. A 1990s lift door-bell dubbed onto Hitchcock's 1950s film! I ask you! It's the equivalent of erasing a word in, say, an original Shakespeare manuscript - perhaps only because the word offends your personal sensibilities - and writing in a substitute term of your own choosing. Note that Hitchcock on the original soundtrack had just the sound of the lift door sliding open, a subliminal reminder of the down-market quality of the hotel in which Judy resides. To quote Steven L. DeRosa's point from last time: 'It is outrageous that such liberties were taken (by the restorers) with an Academy Award Nominated soundtrack.']

Steven L. DeRosa, Yonkers, New York, USA

I did notice another error on the track. During the scene when Madeleine drops the letter in Scottie's mailbox ... when she says 'Goodbye', Stewart's soft 'Goodbye' back to her is completely *gone* now. I double-checked my original disk, and it's sure there.

Jason Rasmussen, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

I just saw the *Vertigo* restoration this weekend; I did notice the sound changes mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 21. One change that particularly bothered me was the omission of some of the street sounds in the scene where Scottie is standing on the stepladder ('I look up, I look down'). On my video copy of the old print, the sound of a car horn immediately before Scottie's fall seems to have 'triggered' his relapse into vertigo. Still, all in all, it was an incredible experience to see the film on the big screen.

Sander Lee, Keene, New Hampshire, USA

I had a great trip to San Francisco, thanks. I visited the Mission San Juan Bautista and it was wonderful. I met a Park Service guide who was there during filming and saw Hitch. She says he got furious when he discovered that the tower he remembered from an earlier trip was gone.

[Editor's note. The tower had burned down, I believe. Anyway, note this rare occasion on which Hitch *did* lose his temper! We mentioned another such occasion in 'MacGuffin' 1. Incidentally, Professor Lee was able to confirm for me something about *The Trouble With Harry* (1956): how location-shooting for that film was centred at Stowe in Vermont's Green Mountains.]

'MacGuffin' 21

Michael Moulds, Editor, International Federation of Film Archives, Brussels, Belgium

I have just finished reading the excellent essay on *The Trouble With Harry* in 'MacGuffin' 21. We would be very pleased to include 'The MacGuffin' in our indexing.

Susan Cole, Concord, California, USA

I greatly enjoyed your latest essay on *The Trouble With Harry*. I had never really thought of this film as having especially deep symbolism, but your essay made me see it in a whole new way. I agree with you wholeheartedly that it is a vastly underrated film and, I might even go so far as to suggest, it ranks with the golden age of romantic 'screwball' comedies. Too bad that many film historians and writers mainly associate it with Shirley MacLaine's film debut. It is a terrific film with universal themes that hold up quite well even when viewed in the context of our cynical turn-of-the-millenium times.

Steven L. DeRosa

Your quite informative and persuasive essay opened many avenues I hadn't fully considered before. But I'd like to concentrate mainly on what you say about 'art' and 'creativity'.

'Through creativity an artist like Klee or Hitchcock arrives at that secret place where he can embrace the life-force and contemplate all time and space.' I have some thoughts along those lines [in my forthcoming book] in looking at the links between *Rope* and *Harry* through the characters of Brandon and Sam.

The films are linked in their discussions of art - a central theme in both. Brandon expresses his desire for artistic talent and in his twisted view believes, 'The power to kill can be just as satisfying as the power to create.' Sam Marlowe, perhaps the most grounded character in Hitchcock's work, can only find satisfaction in his power to create.

Sam Marlowe remains the character least in need of change. From beginning to end, he is open and frank, and seemingly unconcerned by social conventions. This attitude, however, does not take form in feelings of superiority - as it does for Brandon - but rather in something Sam takes pleasure in sharing and spreading. He sings while walking through the countryside for all the world to hear and enjoy, makes over Miss Gravely, openly compliments Jennifer, inspires bravery in Captain Wiles, is unconcerned with an art critic's opinion of his paintings when a millionaire wishes to buy them, and even in the selling of his work he profits not monetarily, but by bartering to obtain gifts for his friends. (I just realised too how both Sam and Brandon act in some way as a matchmaker - although Brandon's intentions in bringing Kenneth and Janet back together are not so innocent.)

Re Calvin Wiggs's lack of 'understanding': it's interesting that he's another representative of the law whose confusion and ineptitude Hitchcock reveals through an inability to comprehend or appreciate art, as had been the case in *Suspicion* (Benson) and *Rear Window* (Doyle). (I'm wondering if Frank's double-take at the laughing-jester painting in *Blackmail* could be included here?)

[Editor's note. Thanks for sharing these fine observations, Steven. They reminded me in turn of *Vertigo*, where Scottie is 'not quite an artist'. And, yes, I'd say that there's a definite theme of 'art' in *Blackmail*, though again *nobody* there seems up to its challenge ... By contrast, speaking of Paul Klee's notion of 'a secret place' where 'all time and space' are knowable, I've lately realised that surrealist André Breton had a similar idea to Klee's: to find the point in the mind where all oppositions cease to be perceived as contradictions.]

Finally, about our Web Page

Jeff Skinner, USA

Thank you for your page. It is one of the best sites on the WWW.

OZ-REPORT
Multicultural Melodramas Down Under

THE EXODUS of Hong Kong film talent, prior to the colony's incorporation into the PRC, has benefited the Australian film industry. Jackie Chan has been shooting his stunt films here and Clara Law has made the first Australian film centring on an expatriate Hong Kong family. Co-scripted by her husband, Eddie Fong, and exquisitely photographed by Dion Beebe, Law's *Floating Life* is a three-generation family melodrama, interspersed with comedy, which was shot in Munich, Melbourne and Hong Kong. The performances vary in professional standard and style, and some of the points (about the costs of migration) are too heavily underlined by dialogue, but the different ambiences of the three locations are beautifully evoked; and the delicate handling of the dénouement movingly conveys the pathos of the Chinese diasporic experience.

As shown in her earlier *Autumn Moon*, Law can use the urban landscape very poignantly to convey unarticulated feelings of loss and dislocation. (One is reminded of Antonioni, who is acknowledged as a seminal influence on the Taiwanese art cinema. Though made in Hong Kong, *Autumn Moon* is closer to the art cinema of Taiwan than the genre cinema of Hong Kong.) In *Floating Life*, the wide and grassy deserted streets of outer suburban Australia are invested with a cold lunar luminosity and strangeness through the use of bleached lighting and pastel colours, in marked contrast to the bright garish colour of the Hong Kong scenes and the darkness of Munich.

Some aberrative aspects of *Floating Life* - the shrill voice of the Australian sister and the grotesque comedy of the Hong Kong-based brother's escapades - evince the stridency and bad taste of our so-called 'Ocker grotesque' family satires, the most recent example of which is *A Fistful of Flies*. A first feature by Italo-Australian Monica Pellizarro, this is a savage account of the trials and tribulations suffered by the rebellious daughter of a conventional Italian Catholic family in an Australian country town. The film has been panned by local critics for being joyless and self-hating. Certainly, its targets - sexually repressed mamma, patriarchal papa with double standards, prurient and prying neighbours, kitsch Catholicism - have become clichés; and its message - the need for sexual and gender liberation - smacks of the 60s. But other filmmakers who repeat old formulas and convey trite messages are treated more generously.

Shine, another Australian film with an anachronistic liberatory message, has achieved acclamation. A family melodrama, and bio-pic, it is based on the trials and tribulations of David Helfgott, a young Perth pianist who, after early promise, suffered a psychological breakdown and who, after long incarceration and slow rehabilitation, returned to the concert stage to receive international acclaim. Like 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' and other 60s literature, it preaches the curative

powers of love and freedom, which can undo the damage wrought by nuclear family and mental institution. Like the anti-psychiatry movement of R.D. Laing, it proposes that mental illness is a misnomer; it really should be termed creative and charming eccentricity. Certainly Geoffrey Rush's performance as the adult Helfgott, unlike those of the younger actors, is both creative and charming, thoroughly deserving of his Oscar for Best Actor. And German actor, Armin Mueller-Stahl, provides depth and weight to the role of the troubled and dictatorial father - even if his steely-blue eyes, German accent and prior type-casting as a Nazi can seem jarringly inappropriate to his role here as an emigré eastern-European Jewish father.

In this family melodrama it is a Jewish family that is oppressive - papa a brutal patriarch and control-freak; mamma a weak, docile shadow - and liberation comes in the form of a new-age astrologist, a warm maternal lover, the good mother triumphing over the bad father for control of the soul of the suffering son. In the crucifixes over the Jewish cemetery in the film's final soaring shot, there are hints of Christian redemption from the severity of an Old Testament patriarchy. A stirring musical sound track, full of Sturm und Drang, provides strong emotional support - although the hammy histrionics of Noah Taylor playing young Helfgott racked by Rachmaninov is over the top! Clearly the film, along with its accompanying books and records, has helped to make Helfgott's resurrected concert career successful with audiences seeking melodramatic performance and voyeuristic entertainment rather than the classical restraint of the concert platform.

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Coming Attractions

The sources of *Rear Window*; book reviews, incl. Charles Silet on 'Soul in Suspense'; etc. Extra items always wanted.

Interview with Sidney Gottlieb, editor of 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock'

[Sidney Gottlieb, who teaches English at the Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, was interviewed via email by the editor of 'The MacGuffin', Ken Mogg, earlier this year. Professor Gottlieb's book 'Welles on Welles' awaits publication, pending final clearance by the Orson Welles Estate. A book review of 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' immediately follows this interview.]

Q. May I start by asking you something about yourself? On the Acknowledgments page (page viii) of 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', you talk briefly about your own early experience of movies. You tell us that you once worked at the Strand Theatre and the Whitney. Do you have any memories from that time, such as of particular films you saw, that bear on Hitchcock and your subsequent appreciation of his work?

A. Those theatres in my hometown - Hamden, Connecticut, USA, the world, the universe, as Joyce might say! - were two of my favourite hangouts. I saw films indiscriminately (maybe the best way to at least begin watching movies!) and fell in love with the whole movie environment and experience more than any particular films. I suspect that that's what made me ripe for Hitchcock, as well as the many other filmmakers I enjoy. I don't have any particular recollection of films that bear on Hitchcock. I do remember that even though I especially liked classic horror films and monster movies, I purposely avoided seeing *Psycho* when it first came out. (I didn't see it until many years later.) I don't remember seeing any Hitchcock film at the time of its initial release. And I think that the first Hitchcock film I ever saw was *North by Northwest*, still one of my favourites.

Q. It's almost a compendium of Hitchcock's work, isn't it? Speaking of that work, someone once asked Hitchcock what was the deepest logic of his films. What would you say is the deepest logic of your book?

A. I'm wondering what Hitchcock's response to that question was.[1] Perhaps I should have included it as the introduction to the book! As to the book's logic: I think that basically I'm a believer in what might be called the 'Figures in the Carpet' school of thought. Artists are always revealing (even when they are attempting to hide) themselves in their work and also in their comments, writings, actions, etc. (One of the premises of 'H on H' is that we should trust the teller as well as the tale!) We glimpse their diversity and complexity by studying all of this, and we also get a sense of certain recurrent ideas, images, themes, habits, fixations, and so on. I was hoping that a collection of Hitchcock's writings might complement his films, which are already generally available, and simultaneously broaden as well as concentrate our knowledge of him. I think that anyone who has spent any time studying Hitchcock can pretty quickly come up with a list summarising what constitutes 'the Hitchcock touch'. I do this for my classes whenever I teach a Hitchcock film, and I'm tempted to call it 'the Hitchcock package' or 'the Hitchcock caricature'. It's a useful exercise, and perhaps a necessary starting point, drawing this 'figure' with a few strokes, as Hitchcock himself was fond of doing. But the more you get into Hitchcock's films and his writings, the more you see other 'figures' emerge in his carpet.

Q. And, as you say, that was what you aimed to show us. A plurality of Hitchcock 'figures'. But I've a couple of questions about that, based in part on my reading of 'H on H'. First, I see Hitchcock as a past-master of tailoring what he says to a particular audience or interlocutor.

A. Yes, but to a certain extent aren't we all? Well, maybe we're not all masters of this art, but doesn't every communication-act typically involve knowing your audience, sizing up the expectations, framing your comments to take into account the context, etc.? I don't believe you're attacking Hitchcock, but in any event let me spring to his defence, in part because I think he is unduly criticised by some people for being manipulative, calculating, rhetorical, repetitive, and insincere: not only in his public appearances and interviews but in his films as well. My argument is not that he isn't all these things, but that they need to be understood more comprehensively (and sympathetically, if possible) and appreciated as creative skills, not just defence mechanisms or limitations of character.

Q. That brings me to my other question about the plurality of 'Hitchcocks' (both in and out of the films themselves). To me, whatever the many choices Hitchcock made affecting his filmmaking and/or his public image, those choices were still seen by him as ultimately aesthetic ones, i.e., the films remained his first concern. (That's why I'm glad when, on p. xxiii, you chide your colleague Professor Kapsis whose book 'Hitchcock:The Making of a Reputation' tends to treat all of Hitchcock's public utterances as basically publicity material.)

A. To me, many of the most interesting writings in 'H on H' show how Hitchcock struggled to forge a kind of *practical* aesthetics of filmmaking. He is very candid about what he could not do in his films: he couldn't focus on certain subjects because of censorship or lack of financial backing; he couldn't make some kinds of films because of technological limitations; he couldn't completely abandon some aspects of the conventional 'contract' between filmmaker and audience if

he wanted to continue to attract an audience; and so on. And yet at the same time he was an adventurous, audacious, and innovative filmmaker, pushing as well as in some ways following his audience, shrewdly adapting to and gradually influencing a production system to allow him to make the kind of films he wanted to make (although always within certain parameters). Yes, the films were what mattered most to him, but Hitchcock knew early on that the aesthetic of filmmaking - at least in a capital-intensive, commercial, audience-oriented environment - could not, for him, be 'pure'. Inevitably for Hitchcock, creativity was compromise, a negotiation of the desirable with the posssible, and that is one of the dramas visible in 'H on H'.

Q. Couldn't we be still more positive about this? You rightly say that for Hitchcock creativity was compromise, yet didn't it work the other way, too? Wasn't commercial compromise for him a creative challenge, very much as a *technical* challenge (e.g., filming on one set) clearly stimulated the creative artist in him?

A. Maybe this says more about me than Hitchcock, but I don't think of 'compromise' as something negative, as though it always involves a betrayal of one's principles. I think of it more broadly as a complicated process of adjustment necessary to make something real, to make something happen, to give something tangible form. I agree very much with you that Hitchcock was fascinated and mobilised by commercial as well as technical challenges. And many of these 'challenges' were what we might call claustrophobic ones, with difficulties associated with pressures and limits. Didn't he want to make a film in a phone booth? I don't think of Hitchcock as a Faustian director like Welles, for whom the figure of the overreacher was central. Even though Hitchcock often spoke of wanting a clear horizon, and of wanting increased creative freedom and technical power, I think much of his energy comes from pushing against the walls around him. And one comes to love those walls! I'm not sure that Hitchcock would have known what to do with 'absolute freedom' or an unlimited budget.

Q. I'd want to suggest that Hitchcock belongs to the great line of artist-entertainers in English literature, from Chaucer through Shakespeare and Dickens, who were all to a large extent men-of-the-people who plainly enjoyed keeping the common touch in their art and indeed felt empowered by it.

A. Yes, the term 'popular artist' is not necessarily a contradiction. But Hitchcock was well aware of the strains involved, especially because being 'popular' - commercially successful as well as pleasing to a mass audience - often seems to pull one in a different direction from being an 'artist' - using one's art as a mode of self-expression, and aiming for the attention and approval of critics whose values, interests, and expectations are typically quite different from those of a mass audience. Hitchcock surely kept the 'common touch', and cared about pleasing the kind of people he envisioned gathering around the refrigerator to talk about a film they had just seen. But he teased, challenged, disturbed, manipulated, mystified, and certainly satirised this audience as well. All this is part of his common touch - and his artistry.

Q. If never exactly 'common' himself, as a person, Hitchcock could sometimes be exceedingly playful, even too-indulgently so! In a 1936 article carrying his name, printed in 'H on H', he says (p. 20) that he found Peter Lorre's sending him a whole crate of canaries at his flat 'one of the classic leg-pulls of British filmland'. (I've heard that Hitchcock later denied it had happened, and I hope that's true!) Only in the Britain of the time would that appear remotely clever or funny, surely! To the rest of us, it may seem to represent the height of inanity. Anyway, here's my point. There seem to be other instances in the book where the director gives himself away, all unawares. Most notably, perhaps, there's the moment (p. 51) when he informs readers that he proposed to Alma when she was seasick, and he seems not to see anything ungallant or unseemly about that. Elsewhere in the book (pp. 70-71), you describe Hitchcock's attitude in published statements about teenage actress Nova Pilbeam as 'both remarkably candid and telling'. Do you think that Hitchcock (like most of us) had a 'blind-spot'? Is editing a book like 'H on H' sometimes an exercise in, well, tact?

A. I really didn't have to face what must often be a painful dilemma for a biographer or an editor of letters, diaries, journals, or other such material. The material I had to work with was, in a way, pre-selected. It had all been published or publicly presented before, and bears the signs of Hitchcock's 'supervision', for lack of a better term. I think much of this material is new - insofar that it hasn't been easily available for modern readers - and interesting, but I never ran across anything that was particularly 'juicy'. So I'm not sure that I had to exercise any unusual amount of tact. And I never had to face any difficult decisions about whether or not to include something, for fear it might let out any dark secrets, or any such thing. Still, I think many of the pieces are indeed 'telling', and they perhaps reveal some things that Hitchcock was not aware that he was revealing about himself. Much of this comes from our interpretations, right or wrong, warranted or unwarranted, of what he tells us. He may very well have expected us to be charmed by his tales of practical jokes, both perpetrated and suffered. Our response, our interpretation of these anecdotes, may be somewhat different. He assembled and presented himself in certain ways in these writings. We may take these materials and reassemble him.

Q. Yes, it's a subjective matter, all right. Now I'd like to defend Hitchcock, a little, against a charge you bring in the book. You say (pp. 69-70) that he doesn't so much 'deny as rationalise' the accusation that he is a misogynist. But surely he had a point about the way women in British society in the 1930s were expected to present themselves? In turn, couldn't he be seen as a potential liberator of those women from their stuffy, society-imposed image? Hitchcock himself defiantly defends his position (pp. 79-81) inasmuch as he says of British film actresses that it is always their desire to appear a lady that makes them 'become cold and lifeless' (p. 80). Mightn't feminists applaud that insight, so unorthodox for its time?

A. When Groucho Marx makes fun of Margaret Dumont, is it because she's a woman or because she's a stuffy aristocrat? I suspect both! It's hard to disentangle the assaults on gender and class in *Duck Soup* - and in *The 39 Steps* as well. I agree with your insistence that what is often somewhat superficially taken as a sign of Hitchcock's misogyny may in fact be something quite different, or in the very least may involve something more complex and far-reaching. I think a strong case can be made that a recurrent action in Hitchcock's films (especially of the 1930s and '40s) is that the 'lady' vanishes as the 'woman' emerges, and frequently this process involves comic discomfort, humiliations, insults, and the mutual education and transformation of a young man and a woman: all qualities that we are familiar with from Shakespearean and screwball comedies. But I'd not dare to fit this rubric to *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *Frenzy*, or various other Hitchcock films. Critics like Tania Modleski and Robin Wood very persuasively argue that Hitchcock's films should neither be reduced to nor released from charges of misogyny.

Q. Granted some lapses on his part, Hitchcock nonetheless could be *very* objective about the human condition. I find one of the key passages in 'H on H' to be his revelation about the importance to him of Poe and his stories, and why. Hitchcock speaks of 'an extraordinary happiness of sitting in an archair reading such tales' (p. 143). By the same token, he notes how he responded deeply to the *unhappiness* in Poe's own life. Then, finally, he disavows any real resemblance between himself and the American writer - which undertandably you suggest (pp. 104-05) shows him being disingenuous, though I'm not so sure about that, precisely because Poe had no sense of humour. (For the mix of the macabre/grotesque *and* humour in Hitchcock's own work, perhaps the best comparison might be with the works of such British authors as Dickens, Collins, Buchan, and 'Sapper'.) Would you care to comment, and to nominate some other key passages concerning Hitchcock in your book?

A. When I suggested that Hitchcock was being perhaps a bit disingenuous, I didn't mean to deny that he was, in fact, drawing some very precise and shrewd distinctions between his work and Poe's. There may well be a kind of therapeutic function of not only humour but of Hitchcock's constant sense of his connection with an audience. (And, by the way, to that list of British authors you mention let's add Chesterton!) Now, concerning key passages: in my brief section-introductions in the book I tried to call attention to what I felt were some of the most interesting anecdotes, lesser-known bits of information, self-analyses, and intriguing (and perhaps not always intentional) self-revelations. I don't want to merely repeat those comments. Nor do I want to trivialise your question by simply listing some of my 'favourite' pieces in the volume (although I am tempted to do just that because I do have some real favourites!). But let me say that I especially like Hitchcock's many comments on the kind of films he thinks he is making, the kind of films he would like to make, and his not always entirely patient assessment of the recalcitrant material he is always dealing with: censors, producers, budgets, audiences, actors, genre conventions and expectations, etc. And when I talk about Hitchcock with my students, I try to get them to consider very carefully Hitchcock's statements in such pieces as "Women are a Nuisance", "What I'd Do to the Stars", "The Enjoyment of Fear", "Why Thrillers Thrive", "Core of the Movie - The Chase", and "Direction".

But despite all the various 'favourite' pieces I might call attention to, I think of the book as one continuous, though not necessarily seamless and perfectly harmonious piece, where everything qualifies or elaborates or explains everything else, and where everything 'contributes'. I've been reading Truffaut's letters recently and I'm of course especially interested in the sections describing his work on, as he called it, the 'Hitchbook'. In one place, he envisions the book as a whole constituting 'a very precise study of the intellectual and mental, but also physical and material, "fabrication" of films'. I hope it doesn't sound too grandiose or self-serving of me to say that from the beginning I hoped that 'H on H' would serve a similar function, and to do so it must be taken in its entirety.

Q. Yes indeed! Now, here are just two or three short questions to end on. First, you report in 'H on H' that before *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) Hitchcock had already 'directed a film financed by some relatives' (p. 4). Is this film known to still exist?

A. I've never seen any other references to it, and I don't think that it has ever been found or identified. It would be great to see it, though, wouldn't it? I'd also like to have a look at all the other early films that Hitchcock was associated with in some way or another before *The Pleasure Garden*: the films that he composed and drew intertitles for, that he was art director or assistant director on (which may well have involved setting up and perhaps even shooting some scenes), and so

on. Early Hitchcock continues to fascinate me, and I don't think that there's been enough work done on this subject. It's nice to know that there's always more to do!

Q. Hitchcock mentions (pp. 309-10) that he worked in Germany on an early film that duplicated in the studio part of the massive entrance to the Milan Cathedral. In Donald Spoto's 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Dark Side of Genius', Hitchcock identifies the film as Graham Cutts's *The Blackguard*, but elsewhere I've seen it identified as the Cutts film that came after that, *The Prude's Fall*. Do you know what film it was?

A. No, I don't. But I must say that Spoto comments very nicely on the German influence on Hitchcock, especially the films of Murnau. I'm hoping to do some more work on this topic: everybody seems to agree on its general importance, but there's not a lot written analysing the specifics. Lang, Murnau, Wiene, the street films, the city films (especially *Berlin: The Symphony of a Great City*), the 'new objectivity': all this left a mark on Hitchcock. And as the Milan Cathedral anecdote illustrates, it wasn't just the influence of directors that we need to pay attention to: Hitchcock was also deeply influenced by the working methods, the tremendous material advantages offered in the huge German studios that he observed and briefly worked in, and so on.

Q. At one point (pp 161-62), when referring to *The Manxman*, you mention Eisenstein's influence on Hitchcock. Were you thinking of some of Hitchcock's shots of the harbour and the quay-side?

A. Yes, I was thinking particularly of the idyllic shots from *Potemkin* of the small boats in the water, which I thought might be echoed in *The Manxman*. And don't forget the political undercurrent in *The Manxman*: the dangerous life of the fishermen and how they are squeezed by the overseas trawlers, by market conditions, and so on. The political themes are much more prominent in the novel that the film was based on. You and I are among the few Hitchcock fanatics who have gone back to read this fascinating and incredibly popular work by Hall Caine: the early 20th-century edition I read was, I believe, a copy of the 27th printing of the novel! In any event, Hitchcock's early writings convey how intrigued he was by contemporary political problems, labour unrest, the General Strike, and so on, and I see more than a few traces of this in his early films. I'm not trying to turn *The Manxman* into either *Potemkin* or Visconti's *La Terra Trema*, but I think that Hitchcock was a keen social observer, and that spirit animates many of his early films.

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Notes

1. Hitchcock's response was actually quite pithy: 'to put the audience through it!'

2. Lary J. Kuhns in Los Angeles has now checked this matter out and shown fairly conclusively that the film *must* have been *The Blackguard*, filmed at the famous UFA Studios in Berlin. As Lary notes, Hitchcock 'only worked there once'.

Nonetheless, some mystery remains. Philip Kemp saw *The Blackguard* in London last year, and writes to us as follows: '*The Blackguard*, as far as I recall, takes place in France and Russia, so Milan Duomo would seem a bit off the itinerary, and I don't think it figured in the print I saw. On the other hand, the plot's quite daffy enough to take in almost anything ... .'

As they say on TV, we'll have further reports as they come to hand - Ed.

BOOK REVIEW

Gottlieb, Sidney (ed.): 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews' (University of California Press/Faber and Faber: USA/UK, 1995; 339pp, hb - but pb due in the Fall)

In a 1957 article, "Murder - With English On It", reprinted in this fine anthology of Alfred Hitchcock's writings and interviews (pp. 133-37), the director cites the Adelaide Bartlett case as typifying the bizarre nature of many English murders. Elsewhere, he called the case "My Favourite True Mystery", and it's not hard to see why. On New Year's Day, 1886, 30-year-old Adelaide Bartlett was accused of murdering her 40-year-old shopkeeper husband, Edwin, after the latter was found dead in bed at their Pimlico lodgings. In Edwin's stomach the coroner found a large quantity of chloroform. Soon another sensation followed, when it was reported that a young Wesleyan parson was involved. It seems that the Rev. George Dyson had effectively been Mrs Bartlett's lover for several months before Edwin's death, having

often visited the Bartletts' home where he'd necked with Adelaide in full view of her husband. The latter, it was later testified, had enjoyed watching them. But when both the parson and Mrs Bartlett were tried on a charge of murder, they were acquitted. An avowedly 'suspicious' jury could not discover how chloroform, which is caustic, could be introduced into someone's stomach without his cooperation. Even the famous surgeon, Sir James Paget, later appealed to the principals, in the name of science, to say how it was done - but got no answer.

Both the Bartlett case and the earlier Madeleine Smith case in Scotland (filmed by David Lean as *Madeleine*, 1949), with its infamous 'Not proven' verdict, must surely have been in Hitchock's mind during the scripting of *I Confess* (1952). 'It's unthinkable that a priest could be involved', someone says in that film. But of course 'unthinkable' murders had already provided the basis of such notable Hitchcock movies as *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) and *Rope* (1948); more broadly, to think (or do) something 'unthinkable' seems to have been one of the tasks Hitchcock always set himself. How else to explain, for example, some of the 'practical jokes' he played, or indeed to explain the basis of his 'wicked' line in macabre humour generally?

There were no doubt other reasons why the Bartlett case caught Hitchcock's imagination. For instance, the case probably came to represent for him an image of English reserve and sexual repression. As several recent 'MacGuffins' (and our Web Page) have noted, sexual repression underlies the 'ambivalent' psychological states on display in such films as *Rebecca* (1940), *The Paradine Case* (1947), *Stage Fright* (1950), and *Vertigo* (1958). Also, it encourages the formation of more-or-less 'polite' perversions, such as impotence and voyeurism, both of which Edwin Bartlett seems to have suffered from.

But enough of the Bartlett case. Perhaps my main reason for mentioning it here is to suggest how almost everything in Professor Gottlieb's book, 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', turns out to be pertinent. True, I had doubts about the inclusion of the (admittedly sometimes hilarious) 1965 "After-Dinner Speech at the Screen Producers Guild Dinner" (pp. 54-58), which could only have been ghost-written, perhaps by the legendary James Allardice before he died. But even that contains a famous passage from English essayist Thomas de Quincey's "Murder As One of the Fine Arts" that Hitchcock soon made his own - something which Gottlieb is quick to point out in a footnote. And Gottlieb makes a still stronger case for the speech's inclusion in the book when, in his masterly section-introduction, he notes how the speech fits with the process of self-fabulation that Hitchcock had always engaged in. These particular fables, with their successive, unstable personae, 'link Hitchcock's world with that of Pirandello, Ionesco, and Borges' (p. 6). Quite so. For my part, I might have said, just slightly differently, that Hitchcock was here displaying how he'd absorbed the lesson of someone like Nietzsche,[1] that the fact of our own subjectivity is really all we can be certain about, and thus should make the most of. Even perhaps to the point of mocking it!

Anyway, before I list how this book confirmed hunches of mine concerning Hitchcock and his movies, let me further praise the job its editor has done. I'd previously read about half the items the book reprints, mainly those from the 1950s onwards. For instance, I'd once combed the files of the 'New York Times' in the Melbourne Public Library, and had triumphantly borne away both "Core of the Movies - The Chase" (dated 1950) and the above-mentioned "Murder - With English On It". But most of the 1930s material was new to me, and as Gottlieb truly says (p. xxii), that's what makes up a large proportion of the volume - not necessarily because Hitchcock did more writing then but more likely because it can be seen today to be about subjects that 'are the most significant and interesting'.

And how perceptive Gottlieb is about most of those subjects and the issues they relate to! Take the way he sees a connection between Hitchcock's supposedly light-hearted tribute to his wife, "The Woman Who Knows Too Much" (dated 1956, but containing anecdotal material from much earlier), and feminist critics' concerns about matters in the films themselves. Gottlieb suggests both that the Hitchcocks' relationship may have had its 'compex, troubled, and troubling' aspects and that '[t]he silent or silenced woman is a recurrent theme in his films' (p. 5) - and then he soon leaves us to get on with our reading of the actual texts.

Here's another example of Gottlieb's knowledgeable and perceptive editing. The 1936 article, "Close Your Eyes and Visualize!", is essentially Hitchcock's declaration of his intent to keep his pictures both fast-moving and of universal appeal ('I like my screen well used, with every corner filled, but with no arty theories clamping the action down ... my thrills are not horror thrills, but full-blooded, healthy stuff for which there is always an eternal demand' - pp. 247, 249). Not only does Gottlieb note that the article's title echoes Elinor Glyn's advice to amateur photoplay writers in the 1920s to truly 'visualize' their material, but he shows that the whole tenor of the article accords with that of popular script-writing manuals of the time (pp. 234-35). That's to say, Hitchcock was happy to identify himself with mainstream filmmaking principles, no doubt in order to master them and refine them.

I've said that 'H on H' confirmed hunches I'd had about the director and his films. If I now list some of those hunches, it's by way of showing how *useful* a book this is, making it, in my view, a worthy complement to Truffaut's famous 'Hitchcock'. I'll start with the fact that Hitchcock notes that he left school at 14, i.e., in about 1913, and that even then he was reading Buchan and Chesterton (p. 60).[2] This suggests to me the near-certainty that he had read Buchan's first two novels, 'Prester John' (1910), with its elements of Rider Haggard and Kipling, and 'The Power-House' (1913), with its ambiguous 'Nietzschean' villain; plus such Chesterton volumes as 'The Man Who Was Thursday' (1908), again with a 'super-man' villain, and 'The Innocence of Father Brown' (1911), with its whimsical figure of a priest-detective. As for Buchan's 'The Thirty-Nine Steps' (1915), Hitchcock tells us elsewhere in 'H on H' (p. 21) that he didn't read that particular novel for the first time until after the War, 'about 1919 or 1920'.

And here's a curious thing. Hitchcock remarks that he vowed then that if he ever became a director he would make a film of the novel. Yet in an article written just a year later than the first, in 1937, he says that he never thought of being a director until the day that Michael Balcon appointed him to that position (p.28). As I see it, these two statements aren't *necessarily* contradictory. In the first, Hitchcock is effectively telling us of a mere 'idea' he'd once had. Little more than a teenager at the time, and both an avid theatre-goer and a no-less-avid film-goer, he'd simply read the novel and thought to himself, 'this would make a good film', i.e., better than it would make a play. To which he'd appended the thought, 'I'll do it myself if I ever become a film director'. But that's hardly a definite statement of an ambition to direct ...

Hitchcock in 1920 seems to have been very aesthetically-aware. That was the same year in which he saw a stage-production of J.M. Barrie's 'Mary Rose' which he then remembered all his life and at one period was very keen to make the basis of a Hitchcock film. (The closest he came was with his use of green-tinting for the hallucination scenes in *Downhill*, 1927, and, 30 years later, when he chose the green neon sign in *Vertigo* to illuminate Judy's 'ghostly' transformation back into Madeleine.)

Another of my hunches was noted in 'MacGuffin' 7, where I speculated that likely influences on Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941), based on a 1932 novel by 'Francis Iles', were the films *Love From a Stranger* (1936) and *Night Must Fall* (1937). Well, Hitchcock had indeed seen both those films, and praises both Basil Rathbone and Robert Montgomery respectively for their portrayals of charming villainy (p. 88) - two models for the Cary Grant part in *Suspicion*.

In 'The MacGuffin' last time, when discussing *The Trouble With Harry* (1956), I invoked the formative period in the life of a young child when it's almost totally dependent on the mother. As noted there, the first six months are crucial. So I was delighted to read Hitchcock's 1963 'dialogue' with psychoanalyst Dr Frederic Wertham (author of a classic study of matricide),[3] in which the director claims that his films trade on 'the fear which is within everyone', a fear he thinks identical to that which underpins the bond forged between a mother and her six-month-old child when she first says to that child 'Boo!' and then smiles at it (p. 149). Further, Hitchcock immediately proceeds to emphasise the importance in his films of humour (p. 150) - implying that this is the equivalent of the mother's reassuring smile.

Last time, too, I remarked Hitchcock's indebtedness to Romanticism. Of the nearly 50 pieces in 'H on H', perhaps the one I'm most grateful for is the 1960 "Why I Am Afraid of the Dark", translated for Gottlieb's book from the original "Pourquoi J'ai Peur la Nuit". This is where Hitchcock refers to his early love for Poe's stories. But now consider more particularly the following excerpt from the article:

> *[Poe] couldn't escape romanticism, because no one can escape the tendency of the era in which he lives. One mustn't forget that ... Poe went to school in England in 1818, when Goethe had already published* Faust *and when the first stories by Hoffman had just come out. This romanticism is perhaps even more apparent in the translation done by Baudelaire ... the French Poe.* (p. 144)

In previous 'MacGuffins', I've invoked Poe (re *Vertigo*), Goethe's 'Faust' (also re *Vertigo*), and Baudelaire (re *North by Northwest*). As for Hoffman, he was of course an early exponent of what Freud called 'the uncanny'. In our next issue, I want to show a likely influence of Hoffman on *Rear Window* (1954) ...

However, a certain basic kind of suspense plot - 'that which weaves commonplace people in what appears to be a routine situation, until it is revealed ... as a glamorously dangerous charade' - comes from a 20th-century model. In one more 1950 piece for the 'New York Times', called "Master of Suspense", Hitchcock is candid about that. 'The spy stories of pre-war days fit these specifications perfectly', he says (p.123). No doubt he's thinking of stories penned by such authors as Buchan, E. Phillips Oppenheim, W. Somerset Maugham, Dennis Wheatley, Peter Cheyney, Graham Greene, and Eric Ambler ...

The Adelaide Bartlett case was far from being the only true-life crime to inform a Hitchcock film. In 'MacGuffin' 2, I speculated on the influence of the Thompson-Bywaters case on *Stage Fright*, and in 'MacGuffin' 12, I suggested that the model for barrister Anthony Keane (Gregory Peck) in *The Paradine Case* was the famous Sir Edward Marshall Hall. In truth, as early as 1937 Hitchcock was expressing a wish to film a celebrated trial, and citing the Thompson-Bywaters case as suitable (p. 260). And in the same 1977 piece, "Surviving", as he speaks of his early reading of Buchan and Chesterton, he mentions how he'd have 'really liked' to have been a criminal lawyer, though 'not, you know, the histrionic type like Marshall Hall ...' (p. 60).

On our Web Page, I suggest that an influence on the titles-sequence of *Torn Curtain* (1966), Hitchcock's spy thriller shot partly in Sweden, was his knowledge of a comparable passage in Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*, then also being filmed in that country. (The passage I have in mind is the famous one in Bergman's film showing the flaring into 'life' of a carbon-arc in a movie projector.) So let's note that in the entry Hitchcock wrote on "Film Production" for the 1965 edition of the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica', he quotes approvingly one of Bergman's tenets, that everything begins with the actor's face ('H on H', p. 218). There's no question that Hitchcock knew and admired his Swedish colleague's work (and, incidentally, that the admiration was returned).

Finally, concerning my hunches, let me refer again to our Web Page, where I suggest that Hitchcock astutely cast at least two gay actors in *Rope*. If you think such casting probably fortuitous, just consider that ten years earlier Hitchcock had written: 'I like an actor to play a part for which his personal experience in life has raised him. In this way he does not have to resort to cheap mannerisms and unnatural movements.' (p. 264) Hitchcock has many excellent comments to make on actors and matters of casting, and it's scarcely too much to say that these comments by themselves would justify any serious Hitchcock buff in owning a copy of this book.

As for the number of times something in 'H on H' illuminated for me a passage from one or other of the films themselves, I soon lost count. I'd say there were about 20 such times, actually. I'm thinking mainly of how an event in Hitch's own life can be seen to turn up later, transmuted, on the screen. The business mentioned in the Gottlieb interview of Peter Lorre's sending Hitch a crate of canaries: isn't that just a larger-scale version of Melanie's rather silly practical-joke with the lovebirds in *The Birds* (1963)? Or, for something a bit more momentous, consider this. In February 1937, you have Hitchcock publishing an article called "Search for the Sun" in which he defends the British studio-system against the charge that it discourages filmmakers from showing the real countryside. He refers in general terms to 'fruitless [and costly] excursions with large production units up and down the land in search of the sun' (p. 251) - yet that same year, himself goes on location to make what is literally the sunniest of his pictures, *Young and Innocent*! As noted in 'MacGuffin'13, much of that film was shot on the flat uplands of Kent, and, after the opening scene, is consistently bathed in sunshine, especially in the scenes featuring young Erica (Nova Pilbeam). You have to wonder if the challenge of avoiding-the-cliché (compare the prairie scene of *North by Northwest*) wasn't already determining the content of some of Hitch's best work.[4]

A couple more foreshadowings. In 1934, the director was already toying with the idea of showing the raising and lowering of the Tower Bridge (pp. 170-71). As we know, he finally did it in *Frenzy* (1972).[5] And if you thought the moment in *Vertigo* at Ernie's when Scottie has just seen Madeleine for the first time, and a wall-light behind her suddenly glows, is simply 'inspired', then you should recall how the Ivor Novello character in *The Lodger* (1926) is first introduced. As Hitchcock describes it, '[t]he housewife opened the door, and just then the gas came up with a full flood of light on this figure. ... You knew then that Jack the Ripper was in a London boarding house.' (p. 273)

What to make of that last item, involving two seemingly disparate films more than 30 years apart? To me, it's further 'proof' of what Hitchcock so often spoke of: the possibility of 'pure film'. Put simply - or philosophically - everything's ultimately *one*. Yet ask an audience to see whatever you want them to see, and if you're a good enough director, they probably will. The one becomes multitudinous again! Nonetheless, the unity of all things remains. As I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 8, that Kantian/Schopenhauerian idea seems definitely to inform a film like *Torn Curtain*. And I think once more of those respective titles-sequences in *Torn Curtain* and *Persona*, each with its sudden flaring *ex nihilo* of flame and light. Nothing but pure film! Or alternatively, the 'life-force'! In turn, I think of the matching sequence in *Lifeboat* (1943), where the sudden engulfing of the sinking ship's funnel in a great burst of steam and flame gives birth, as it were, to the very film itself. (Among the images of flotsam that follow immediately is that of a pack of cards spreading out ...)

Now, reading passages in 'H on H', I was struck by how often the most apt comparison seemed indeed to be with Schopenhauer - with, let's say, that philosopher's emphasis on the typically harsh way the world goes. For instance, Hitchcock in 1950 called the chase 'the final expression of the motion picture medium' (p. 125). That is, he was noting how there's something intrinsically dynamic both about the medium itself and about what it shows. In 1959, Hitchcock told the story of the king who when granted his wish to see the future, suddenly understood how much pain, misery, and

death lay ahead - along with the beautiful things - and immediately asked that the future be hidden again (p. 140). In 1963, Hitchcock remarked apropos *The Birds*, that 'nature can be awful rough on you' (p. 294). Yet that fact had never stopped him from seeing his job as 'making the audience suffer' (p. 272) because, after all, '[t]he basis of the cinema's appeal is [not rational but] emotional' (p.245). Suspense, he declared, 'has to do largely with the audience's own desires and wishes' (p. 272).

Those last few remarks were made in the 1930s. They show an intuitive understanding on Hitchcock's part of what would later contribute to his pessimism concerning a seemingly immanent, all-pervasive force that wreaks its own suffering in the world. The 1950 article "Master of Suspense" was something of a transitional piece in that respect. As Gottlieb notes, Hitchcock talks there of how film-making itself is an often harsh business, and that an aspect of Hitchcock's famous cameo appearances in his films involves 'a kind of humbling of himself, a momentary opportunity for him to be subjected to - in fact, "shot" and "hit" by - the cinematic weapons he usually wields' (p. 102). Gottlieb adds that these provide a 'startling reminder of the hostility and aggression that are intimately bound up with film-making (indeed, with all acts of photography, as Susan Sontag suggests in *On Photography*)'.

A couple of pages later, Gottlieb makes this observation: 'God is the director *extraordinaire* and, interestingly enough, works in Hitchcock's genre.' (p. 104) If that's true, it involves no appreciable slackening of effort on Hitchcock's part. As I began by suggesting, Hitchcock probably came increasingly to feel how the fact of our own subjectivity is all that - in this phenomenal world - we can be certain about. That, and the sheer weight and thrust of the world's presence. As this invaluable book shows, Hitchcock was a director capable of doing justice on film and, yes, in words, to both the philosophical and the pragmatic aspects of his craft. A certain simplification occurs in both mediums, but that, too, is part of Hitchcock's art. 'It takes so long, and so much work, to achieve simplicity', he said feelingly in 1977 (p. 62).

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Notes

1. Notice I say 'absorbed'. Hitchcock, the rather dandified and snobbish Englishman, was a child of his times - and for British intellectuals and their circle in the early decades of this century that meant a certain familiarity with Nietzschean ideas, notably the concept of the Superman/Overman. I do feel that even Hitchcock's penchant for the outrageous and the 'unthinkable' can be attibuted, to some extent, to Nietzsche's 'influence'.

All of the above has been discussed here previously. A related matter is the widespread interest, in Britain and Europe, at the turn of the century, in notions of a 'life-force' and the 'élan vital'. Recently I learnt about a further aspect of that interest when I saw attributed to Andrew Lang (1844-1912), the scholar-friend of Rider Haggard, the idea that adventure stories attune people to an animal-like life-force that we share with our primate ancestors (Joseph Bristow, ed., 'The Oxford Book of Adventure Stories', 1996, p. xii).

Thus I'd surmise that Hitchcock's self-fabulation may be seen as a more-or-less instinctive response on his part to the need for 'adventure' in an age whose people had become increasingly 'sluggish and jellified' (his description). Not for a moment, though, do I suggest any *desperation* by Hitchcock personally. That's precisely why he could delight in - and mock - the whole rigmarole of self-creation ...

2. Rather significantly, he adds that he never cared much for Sexton Blake (the detective hero of boys' stories, who solved his cases with more brawn than brain) 'and the lower orders' - though he read 'all the real-life crime stories I could get hold of'.

3. Originally published as "The Matricidal Impulse" in a 1941 issue of 'Journal of Criminal Psychopathology', the work was reprinted in 1966 as 'Dark Legend: A Study in Murder' in popular paperback format. The influence of *Psycho* perhaps?

4. Years afterwards, Nova Pilbeam dutifully described *Young and Innocent* as 'quite the sunniest film I was involved with'! (Brian McFarlane, "The director who knew too much", in the 'Sunday Age', Melbourne, 26 April 1994) In referring to the prairie scene in *North by Northwest*, I have in mind Hitchcock's remark that the scene inverts the elements of a street-corner assignation on a rainy night shown in a film like Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949).

5. The titles-sequence of *Frenzy* took additional stimulus from Sidney Gilliat's *London Belongs to Me* (1948) - as noted in a previous 'MacGuffin'.

BLOOPERS

To start with, a couple of corrections to the article last time on *The Trouble With Harry*. That film was, of course, Bernard Herrmann's first for Hitch - please forgive my slip on p. 11 where I implied otherwise.

And on p. 17, I managed to mis-quote a line of dialogue. Young Arnie does *not* refer to the 'poor rabbit' (which 'should have carried a four-leaf clover'). What he actually says of the rabbit is: 'four rabbit's feet and he [still] got killed'. And then follows the four-leaf clover remark. However, I think that Sam's response, 'And a horse-shoe', certainly illustrates my point about the capacity of the artist to respond with a depth of sympathy that is endorsed by the film ...

My ears also played tricks with me on another occasion when (see 'MacGuffin' 11) I thought I heard in *Vertigo* Madeleine say of her recurring dream that it takes place 'somewhere in the night'. (When I listen to my videotape of the film, the line *still* sounds like that to me!) However, various people assure me that Madeleine is actually asking Scottie to take her 'somewhere in the light'. The clincher is that 'in the light' is how it's written in the script ...

Finally, when I was writing that article in 'MacGuffin' 11 on the 'sources' of *Vertigo*, my notes included mention of both the J.M. Barrie play 'Mary Rose' (which Hitchcock saw in London in 1920) and the 1956 film *The Search for Bridey Murphy*. But somehow I neglected to mention either of them in the article itself. And a couple of further 'sources' I would now definitely include if I were re-writing that article are the 1948 film *Corridor of Mirrors* (a likely influence, too, on Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn*, 1949) and the 1956 *Julie*, starring Doris Day and Louis Jordan, set on the coast of Monterey. I discuss the latter film, at least, on our Web Page, in the article called "Out of Hitchcock's Filing Cabinet".

Extract from 'World Film News and Television Progress (incorporating Cinema Quarterly)', Second Number, May 1936, p. 5:

HITCHCOCK, THE MAN KORDA CANNOT SIGN
Says C.A. LEJEUNE

Alfred Hitchcock is Public Monument No. 1 of the British film industry. Visiting Americans demand to see him in the same breath with which they ask for St. Paul's Cathedral and the lawns at Oxford. They are always surprised - who wouldn't be? - with what they see.

Hitch is a vast mountain of a man in the late thirties, with snapping black eyes, a ruddy face, and a child's lower lip above a quantity of chins.

His nose is good, but you don't notice it. His hand is enormous, and engulfs yours when you shake it. He dresses mostly in black, and his face persistently wears an expression either sleekly malicious or faintly surprised.

Everybody likes Hitch. His heart is as large as a person. He is prodigiously generous, never forgets an old employee, and anyone can impose on him with a hard-luck story. When you eat with Hitch, you eat like a prince and drink like an emperor. He'll say, "What about a meal, kid?" and take you to the most refined and expensive restaurant in London. But he'll always go, if you'll let him, in his oldest clothes.

He has a tiny wife, who writes his scenarios, and a tiny, fairy-like daughter, who bobs an old-fashioned curtsey to you when you meet her. These two small persons rule his life.

Loves Melodrama

He loves music, mystery and melodrama. He likes to imagine all the people he knows in melodramatic situations. He gloats over the idea of an aeroplane dropping live bombs on the Aldershot [Military] Tattoo. Like the children in *The Brushwood Boy*, he "sets light to populous cities to see how they would burn."

On the set he's a sadist He revels in spiritual de-bagging. Nothing delights him more than to take a film star with a good opinion of himself, work him until he sweats, and then publicly can the sequence. His language is fierce, and his humour rarely drawing-room. He respects nobody's feelings; but everybody respects him.

Hitch's genius is for draughtsmanship. He is an instinctive visualiser. His film scripts are minor works of art, every shot blocked on the margin of the page in rough design. When a script is finished, he loses interest in the picture. He would rather get on with the next job. The present one is already projected in his mind's eye.

When he talks to you, his broad, soft pencil sneaks out and sketches illustrations on the menu card or tablecloth. The underlining of his signature slips into a self-portrait, rudely revelatory. He can forge your signature in a moment, so that you wouldn't know it from your own.

He began his film career by designing titles - painting "Came the Dawn" in white letters on a black ground, or "One Week Later" in black letters on a white ground, with appropriate illustrative symbols. In twelve years he has made more good pictures than any other director in this country - and he looks like continuing to make them.

His favourite star is Jimmy Cagney, his favourite film *Eight Girls in a Boat*, and he is probably the only man left in England whom Korda wants, but can't persuade to sign on the dotted line.

Best Films of 1996

Here are three 'ten best' lists of films screened in Australia last year, compiled by three top film critics ...

Of special interest to Hitchcock fans may be Evan Williams's listing of *The Confessional*, directed by the Canadian stage producer Robert Lepage. Combining a modern story set in Quebec with glimpses of Hitchcock at work filming *I Confess* in 1953, the movie is considered by Evan 'a beautiful, mysterious film, worthy of Kieslowski'.

Six films are mentioned here more than once (but none is mentioned thrice): Jarmusch's *Dead Man*, Bertolucci's *Stealing Beauty*, Joel Coen's *Fargo*, Altman's *Kansas City*, Mike Leigh's *Secrets and Lies*, and Australian director Baz Luhrman's *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*.

Adrian Martin's list
Adrian is a film critic for the Melbourne 'Age', and has contributed to 'Sight and Sound'. His list is drawn from all sources, including revival-houses and television.

1. Safe (Todd Haynes, 1995)
2. Gun Crazy (Joseph H. Lewis, 1949)
3. Valley of Abraham (Manoel de Oliveira, 1993)
4. Dead Man (Jim Jarmusch)
5. Heat (Michael Mann)
6. Stealing Beauty (Bernardo Bertolucci)
7. La Peau Douce (François Truffaut, 1964)
8. Crush (Alison Maclean, 1992)
9. Fargo (Joel Coen)
10. The Brothers Skladanowsky (Wim Wenders)

Tom Ryan's list
Tom lectures in Film at the Swinburne University, Melbourne, and is a film critic for the 'Sunday Age'. He did a post-graduate degree in Film under Robin Wood at the University of Warwickshire, England. Tom's list is confined to feature-length, first-release films which received local theatrical release.

1. Fargo
2. The White Balloon (Jafar Panahi, Iran)
3. Kansas City (Robert Altman, USA)
4. Stealing Beauty
5. Shanghai Triad (Zhang Yimou, China)
6. Vacant Possession (Margot Nash, Australia)
7. Secrets and Lies (Mike Leigh, UK)
8. W. Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet (Baz Luhrman, USA)
9. La Ceremonie (Claude Chabrol, France)
10. Sense and Sensibility (Ang Lee, UK)

Evan Williams's list
Evan's work appears in the 'Weekend Australian' and 'Quadrant'. He is an advisor to the Ministry of the Arts in New South Wales. A short review by Evan of the film *Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey* follows this item.

1. Secrets and Lies
2. To Die For (Gus Van Sant)
3. Dead Man
4. Persuasion (Roger Michell)
5. Kansas City
6. Le Confessional (Robert Lepage, Canada)
7. William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet
8. Braveheart (Mel Gibson)
9. Casino (Martin Scorsese, USA)
10. The Pillow Book (Peter Greenaway, UK)

'Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey'

HITCHCOCK FANS CAN SEE the origins of one of the director's most innovative musical experiments in a documentary, *Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey*, written and directed by Steven M.Martin. Premiered at the 1995 Boston Film Festival, the film is now screening in Australian art houses. Leon Theremin (1901-1993), a Russian physicist, developed his electronic instrument in the 1920s; the pitch was controled by the player's hands moving through magnetic fields over what looked, in the early versions, like a wooden lectern or writing desk with two antennas. It was (is?) the only musical instrument to be played without being touched.

Its weird, plaintive sub-human sound quickly caught on in Hollywood. Miklos Rozsa first used it in Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945). Although Rozsa won an Oscar for his score, one Hitchcock authority, Donald Spoto, considered the film's music intrusive, observing that it established the theremin as 'Hollywood's official instrument to suggest psychosis.' The theremin was used the same year in Billy Wilder's *Lost Weekend* [and in Hitchcock's radio production of 'Malice Aforethought' - Ed.], and later by Hitch's favourite composer, Bernard Herrmann, in his score for Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). Another science fiction film, *It Came From Outer Space* (Jack Arnold, 1953), shot in 3-D, also made extensive use of the theremin.

The career of the inventor was no less extraordinary than his instrument. According to the producers of Martin's film, in 1928 Leon Theremin set up a studio in New York catering to high society patrons interested in his pioneering work, which concerned advanced electronic instruments, light shows, an electronic dance platform, and a colour television system. In 1938 Theremin was kidnapped from the New York apartment where he lived with his American wife, the black ballet dancer Lavinia Williams, by the NKVD (the forerunner of the KGB) and taken back to Russia, where he was imprisoned for 'anti-Soviet propaganda' in Magadam, a Siberian labour camp. Later he was sent to a military prison and set to work on top-secret military electronics, which culminated in his creation of the electronic bug. Theremin personally supervised the bugging of both the American Embassy and Stalin's personal apartment, and was awarded the Stalin Prize, First Degree, one of the USSR's highest honours.

Theremin later began teaching at the Moscow Conservatory of Music, but was thrown out for continuing his work in electronic music: electricity, said the Soviet authorities, should be reserved for the execution of traitors. From then on Theremin worked on routine assignments until his retirement, largely unaware of the influence of his instrument elsewhere in the world.

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[Editor's note. Though Theremin's wife was Lavinia Williams, his most devoted disciple was the Russian-born violinist Clara Rockmore, herself the world's leading exponent of the instrument called the theremin. In his newspaper review of Martin's film, Evan Williams notes that it ends with Gershwin's 'Summertime' matched to old footage of Leon and Clara in their youth, creating 'an autumnal sweetness such as I have rarely seen in films'.]

South by Southeast: Hitchcock's 'Rich and Strange' (1932)

'I want some life. Life, I tell you.'
- Fred, in *Rich and Strange*

[T]he entire point of Rich and Strange *... has something to do with the extremes of life and death, and the* acceptance *of life and death on their own terms. The reactions ... by the Chinese are entirely appropriate to an Oriental philosophy, if not to polite middle-class Britons. What Fred and Emily see is the exact opposite of their own constant* yearning, *their dissatisfaction with their lot.*
- Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992), p. 33

'Is anybody or anything real, then?'
- Fred, in *Rich and Strange*

*Simply as a drama, [*Rich and Strange*] is a marvellous mood piece. The two new loves, one gentle and understanding, the other uneven and rather tempestuous, but both plausible, are as real as one gets. ...*
- Kirk Bond, "The Other Alfred Hitchcock", in 'Film Culture', Summer 1966, pp. 33-34

[Synopsis of the film. Fred and Emily Hill, an average young married couple who live in suburban London, inherit money and decide to take a world cruise. On board ship, the experience goes to their heads, as they each make new acquaintances. Fred ends up losing most of their inheritance when he's seduced by a fake princess. Meanwhile, Emily has become involved with the charming Commander Gordon, who is en route to his plantation in the tropics. When he disembarks at Singapore, Emily makes the painful decision not to accompany him, because she sees that Fred needs her. Re-united, the couple are further driven back together after their cargo boat is wrecked in the South China Sea. Rescued by a Chinese junk, they return home to England, having had their fill of romance and adventure.]

MORE THAN ONCE IN 'The MacGuffin', I've noted that a basic Hitchcockian effect concerns the use of ambiguity. *Rich and Strange* displays that effect in full measure. The ambiguity involved takes two main forms: contextual and structural. Let's start with the first kind. Early in the film, most of the scenes are played as light domestic comedy, with Fred (Henry Kendall) the disgruntled office worker/commuter, Emily (Joan Barry) his foil as a good little housewife - who, when not preparing her husband's favourite meal of steak-and-kidney pudding, toils uncomplainingly at her Singer sewing-machine. Yet suddenly the comic tone is interrupted by Fred's exclamation, 'the best place for us is a gas oven'. A jarring note of 'quiet desperation' has been sounded. Henceforth, we'll contemplate what happens more carefully. We'll ask ourselves: what is the real point of what we're seeing? The shipboard scenes surely aren't *just* providing another variant of light romantic comedy, are they?

Nonetheless, notice how cleverly Hitchcock, after sounding that discordant note, promptly restores the basal comic tone. He does it with a diversion, or, rather, several of them. No sooner has Fred uttered his 'gas oven' remark than Emily neutralises at least part of our own shock by saying that anyway the couple have a roof over their heads, 'and lots of things'. Then, with a clatter, the evening post arrives through a slot in the front-door. Wet-blanket Fred comments, 'it'll only be the gas bill', and while we're pondering *that* vaguely surreal touch, Emily chirrups another of her inadequate responses, 'Serve you jolly well right if it is, talking about gas ovens'. By this time our first startled feelings have been well and truly buried, even as they've seemed to be acknowledged ...

Now, as well as 'contextual' ambiguity - where the prevailing comedy is momentarily called in question - the film displays a definite 'structural' ambiguity. In effect, the latter is built on the paradox attaching to the familiar axiom, 'Blessed are those who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed'.[1] It's familiar, yes, but also, often, unquestioned. But not by Hitchcock! In fact, *Rich and Strange* provides an early anticipation of the 'Faustian' theme that's in *Vertigo* (1958).[2] And if Emily Hill is the good little housewife who 'expects nothing', Fred Hill is heard initially to positively demand 'life'; then, once he meets the Princess (Betty Amann), he's determined to have that life up to the hilt - that is, as far as his drab English upbringing will let him. Morever, though Fred's really a bit of a baby - at times, indeed, a Harry Langdon look-alike - it seems clear that a part of Hitchcock is with him. They're namesakes, after all.[3]

During the middle part of the film, Fred's foil isn't so much Emily as the bespectacled old maid, Miss Imery (Elsie Randolph),[4] whose costume for the ship's fancy-dress evening is that of Bo Peep, and who herself often looks as lost as her reputed flock. When Fred, dressed in sheikh's vest and bejewelled armband, finds himself partnering Miss Imery in a dance, his behaviour is boorish - yet we understand how he's impatient to re-join the Princess, who's awaiting him in her cabin. Appropriately, his yearning has a sort of correlative in the film's own sensuousness, by which I mean the rhythmically-paced images of shipboard activity, of the sea, and above all of 'foreign parts'. As in *Vertigo*, we're being set up - seduced - for the moment when a price must be paid and our hopes finally dashed, in this case during a literal shipwreck.

And as Donald Spoto sees well, the Chinese scenes present us and the characters with the inverse of the 'great expectations' that are at play in the first two-thirds of the film. Significantly, the Chinese attitude to life still forms a *part* of life, and thus marks the defeat of Fred's hubristic attempt to, as it were, get the better of that life, to dictate its terms. What I'm remarking here is effectively an early instance of Hitchcock's 'philosophical pessimism'. This time I think of *Rear Window* (1954). Twice in the earlier film Commander Gordon (Percy Marmont) had asked Emily, 'Like to see a ship we were once passengers in?' Actually, both times they're still standing on the ship's deck, yet so much has happened since they first came on board that everything seems altered.[5] It's as if they had stepped outside of themselves to look back with skinned eyes on where they had been and where they are now - precisely the sort of structural premise on which *Rear Window* is built. But, as in that film, a cautionary note enters. The second time that the Commander asks his question, it's clear to both him and Emily that matters between them have got dangerously out of hand. What had begun as a seemingly harmless shipboard flirtation, now, with Singapore in sight, threatens to sweep away Emily's marriage to Fred, whom she still loves, if more in a 'motherly' way than anything else. 'A wife is more than half a mother', she says, 'and I've been married to [Fred] for over eight years.'

So the whole situation here is, as I say, ambiguous. And once again, by *inverting* the initial set of assumptions (such as Emily's, as to the manner of her attachment to Fred), the ambiguity becomes a structurally-expressed one. *Is* lack of 'great expectations' - or its opposite - necessarily a good thing? *Is* wifely fidelity a simple, unquestionable matter? About the only sure answer the film comes up with is that 'life' is bigger, or more fundamental, than any of the people concerned.

* * *

If I were asked to nominate the single most impressive feature of *Rich and Strange*, I would say - though this is seldom remarked - that it's the soundtrack, especially in the first two-thirds of the film. Here we can see working the belief in seamless continuity that Hitchcock would later make perhaps his strongest suit in films like *Notorious* (1946), *Rope* (1948), and *Dial M For Murder* (1954). Posing for much of its length as little more than a photo-album of a holiday cruise - even down to the use of quasi-captions like 'Marseilles, the big ship bound for the Far East' and 'Fred' - the film combines music and sound-effects in a flowing, often subtle commentary. The alternating sensuous excitement and lassitude of a sea-voyage is here. So, too, is that sense of life as a 'passing parade' which throws up encounters with odd characters like those one may meet briefly at a party, as film theorist Siegfried Kracauer once remarked of Hitchcock's films in general. And each time one of the several wide-shots of the main passenger-deck recurs, the soundtrack knows what to do. Notice, for instance, how when the three women dressed as jockeys for the fancy-dress evening come striding by, all three abreast, the music picks up their rhythm, catching perfectly its faint absurdity.[6]

But there's any number of fine, pointed sight-gags in *Rich and Strange*, right from the first scene which clearly foreshadows *North by Northwest* (1959). It's home-time in Fred's office, and the stylised establishing-shot showing a looming clock in the foreground and rows of workers at their desks behind it, echoes the stage Expressionism of a play like Elmer Rice's 'The Adding Machine' (1923), which almost certainly had reached London.[7] The workers' mechanical exit from the building, two by two, into a rainy evening and down the London Underground, is cleverly filmed - here there seems to be an echo of the recent work of René Clair (as 'MacGuffin' reader Leslie Shepard has suggested to me). And the ensuing scenes on the Underground emphasise the sense of mad, 'other-directed' rush that will motivate Fred to make his outburst about wanting more 'life' for Emily and himself. What he'll actually get, of course, is more of the same, only different.

Paris, when they arrive there, is as hectic and crowded as London. (The sweeping shot of a pissoir - just one more of the sights - with its row of shoes, neatly echoes the idea.) But by now Fred and Emily have adopted a tourist mentality, so for a time they see only the exotic side of all this. The film speeds up the views of traffic and well-known landmarks, and inserts close-ups of Fred and Emily's heads swivelling to take everything in. In a double sense, their heads are indeed being turned. But the pay-off to these shots will come later, on the Chinese junk, and it will be a grim one ...

That the couple are two innocents abroad is expressed in several sight-gags at the Folies Bergère. Afterwards, another type of innocence is implied by the gag in which husband and wife, both tipsy, prepare for bed. Fred stumbles and seems to Emily to be praying. She sinks to her knees and starts to pray herself. Noticing this, Fred prays too - for real this time. Thus the couple 'makes' itself, perhaps with rewards of which the two people are scarcely aware. Most definitely, the scene I've described has its special place in this film ...

But, in their very innocence, the two now drift apart. Again a number of sight-gags say much. On the fancy-dress evening, Fred and Emily find themselves for a time seated in adjacent deck chairs. Each is sipping a drink in a glass. Their body-language clearly shows how much each resents the nearness of the other. Their mutual antipathy finds expression, too, when everyone goes ashore at Colombo. When Fred's rickshaw happens to lock wheels with Emily's, the shaking movements of the two carriages suggests vehement hostility. But nothing is said, and doesn't need to be. The two people sit stiffly, in stony silence. Fade-out.

* * *

Structurally, *Rich and Strange* owes something to the first feature-film Hitchcock directed, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), and anticipates several of his films to come. Thus, in *The Pleasure Garden*, you already have the voyage to the tropics which shows up some of the darker or more forbidden impulses of certain characters, not all of whom may survive to make the return-trip. Also, *The Pleasure Garden* introduces the trope of the phoney princess - with this difference, that there it's a phoney *prince* who beguiles the heroine's friend, Jill, back in London. (Interestingly, that unscrupulous fellow looks exactly like the bearded man we glimpse in *Rich and Strange* at the Folies Bergère, who pinches Emily on the bottom.)[8] Meanwhile, the heroine herself, Patsy, has accompanied her no-good husband, Levet, part of the way on his voyage, with the understanding that he will eventually re-join her. At Lake Como, on what is in fact their honeymoon, she

remarks with delight on the local women in the town square with their babies, and we guess where her thoughts are tending. We'll hear a similar remark in *Rich and Strange* when Emily leans over the ship's rail at Port Said and comments fatuously to Fred on how for centuries 'all those people [have been] having their babies ...'. There are parallel scenes in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) and even *Psycho* (1960) where, as noted in 'MacGuffin' 4, the money that Marion steals from Cassidy (a wedding-present for 'my sweet little ... baby', as he calls it), represents for *her* the baby she wants from Sam.

More broadly, if you're seeking to compare this, after all, very *Catholic* film with another, I can think of no more apt comparison than with Rossellini's very fine *Viaggio in Italia/Voyage to Italy* (1953). There, too, a childless English couple (Ingrid Bergman, George Sanders) experience a marriage-crisis when they travel abroad to inspect a property left them by a relative. They split apart for a time, each finding interesting new companions, but, following a key scene set amidst the ruins at Pompeii, they both realise how much they still need each other . ... Even from that brief description, based on my viewing of the shortened foreign-release version of the film, the similarity to *Rich and Strange* is evident. The full-length, Italian-release version sounds even closer. Alexander (the Sanders character) becomes the lover of an exiled Russian countess, while Katherine (Bergman) has an affair with the head of the Mafia in Naples (compare Emily's affair with the wealthy plantation-owner, Commander Gordon).

That noted, let's now examine the last section of Hitchcock's film - the shipwreck sequence - to see what it's doing in the context of some of the things I've been describing, not least the film's 'structural' ambiguity.

* * *

It's scarcely stretching a point, I think, to compare the shipwreck and its aftermath to the Pompeii sequence in *Viaggio in Italia*: another scene of devastation, with a not-dissimilar sense of what was once here and what, by contrast, now remains. For in Hitchcock's film, the ship that suddenly begins to founder in the South China Sea doesn't in fact sink straight away; indeed, Fred and Emily find themselves next morning eerily alone on the still-floating vessel, after the order to abandon ship had been given but the couple had become trapped in their cabin. Though the sequence may well have found its inspiration in Buster Keaton's *The Navigator* (1927), Hitchcock soon dampens any excessive levity on our part by showing us, lying on the deck, the pyjama-clad body of an old man who hadn't survived the rush to the lifeboats (presumably he'd had a heart-attack).[9]

In other words, by this stage in the film Hitchcock is presenting us with life and death in the raw. When Fred had demanded 'life' back home in his row house in suburban London, he'd glanced enviously and longingly at a large painting on the wall, depicting a full-masted clipper-ship with a couple of fishermen in a rowing-boat in the foreground. That romanticised image of the sea corresponds to the romanticised image of a wind-blown desert we see on the wall of the realty office in *Psycho*, at which Marion glances early in that film. What neither Fred Hill nor Marion Crane initially comprehends, though, is that in a sense they're already part of life, if only they knew it. Here again we may detect Hitchcock's 'philosophical pessimism' working. The question arises: should either Marion or Fred ever have tried to 'run away' from their problems, of which boredom was clearly one of the most pressing yet also the most life-typical?[10] Well, there can be no absolute answer to that, of course, which is precisely the point. *Rich and Strange* is probably the first Hitchcock film in which the notion of a life-force is pressed into play for dramatic or thematic purposes, though many Hitchcock films subsequently would do so (as several recent 'MacGuffins' have shown). The very title of *Lifeboat* (1943) was no accident in the corpus of Hitchcock's work.

Raw life is also stressed in what now follows. A not-very-romantic Chinese junk turns up, its crew concerned mainly with looting the sinking ship (a quintessential, less-than-flattering image of humanity). Their *particular* outlook is crystallised in a couple of incidents. As Fred and Emily, greatly relieved to be rescued, pass on board the junk, no-one seems to express the slightest interest in the couple's welfare or to welcome them. Even when, moments later, one of the Chinese' own crew becomes entangled in a rope-ladder thrown over the ship's side, and slowly drowns, no-one is able to reach him to save him; instead, they watch impassively, seemingly without feeling. (For what it's worth, I was reminded of a near-iconic image of modern-day Shanghai: viz. the street stalls with their mounds of writhing eels to which no-one seems to give a second glance. The American title of Hitchcock's film was *East of Shanghai*.)

Of course, Fred and Emily are horror-struck by this last incident, and as much by the impassivity of the Chinese onlookers as by the - almost equally impassive - death of the man who drowns. Pointedly, Hitchcock films the scene with quick, intercut shots of watchers and watched, in a manner anticipating the sequence in *The Birds* (1963) that shows the death of the salesman who drops a lighted match in a gasolene slick and blows himself up. There's the same sense of fascinated powerlessness to prevent what's coming, and similar shots of heads turning. Only, in this case, the heads are just those of Fred and Emily, who switch their horrified gaze from the drowning man to the silent watchers, then back again.

As I indicated earlier, I see these shots of turning heads as being the pay-off to the ones in the Paris sequence. There, Fred and Emily had behaved exactly like mindless tourists for whom everything was merely 'a show'. They had started to come to their proper senses only much later, with the defeat of their individual fantasies, of which Fred's, involving the fake princess, had been especially culpable. His line in the Singapore hotel, 'Is anybody or anything real, then?', is thus crucial. It marks his first grudging admission that he's not life's master but rather its servant. Afterwards, the film further breaks Fred down - and, in view of Hitchcock's alleged misogyny, notice that it's a male character we're talking of - when, trapped with Emily in their cabin on the sinking ship, he tells her, 'I'm scared, Em'.

As I say, Hitchcock now presents life and death non-romantically, and in the raw. 'Life' becomes not a show presented *for* our English couple but something that is *regardless* of them. They're certainly part of it, but it's indifferent to their presence - and on the Chinese junk, quite literally so. In a sense, life itself is what's 'rich and strange'. Yet, by that very fact, life has its own reality, and if only Fred and Emily could acknowledge that truth, they'd be well on their way to finding a degree of contentment. This is a philosophical point - basic, let's note, to the work of that most universal of philosophers, Schopenhauer - which would become gradually more integral in several later Hitchcock films, though always ambiguous. I believe it to give a 'mystical' shading to the endings of such films as *Rear Window* (when Lisa starts to read 'Beyond the High Himalayas'), *Vertigo* (the 'chthonic' nun), and *Psycho* (Norman in his 'Buddhist' robes), as discussed in previous 'MacGuffins'. But let's return to *Rich and Strange* and how Hitchcock insists on reminding us about the raw side of life.

It's there in the smallest things. Another pay-off to an earlier moment comes when Emily sits on a knot in the junk's planking - her bottom takes a beating in this film! And the ship's cat that had so much resembled their pet back home ends up being turned by the Chinese into a delicious chop-suey. (A matching verbal gag is heard in *Rear Window*.) Is nothing sacred, then? That question seems the obvious complement to Fred's in the Singapore hotel room. And the film, I think, answers it identically. Yes, there is something - life itself.[11] For now the film picks up again on the 'baby' motif. A baby is born to a woman on the junk's deck, in primitive circumstances. Emily's 'mothering' instinct is again aroused. And we take the hint - which is confirmed - that maybe there will be another baby in her life soon besides the once-infantile Fred, who does seem to have been matured a little by recent events.

Though *only* a little, and not without ambiguity. Listen to Fred's continuing xenophobia ('These Chinese breed like rabbits'). And his basic complacency when he compares being on the junk to yachting (here, the film cuts to a shot of one of the crew pushing on a massive tiller). In this, however, Emily is his all-too-obliging accomplice. In a sequence that anticipates *Lifeboat*, she exclaims brightly that she actually *likes* being 'shipwrecked'. And when Fred notes that they can tell their insurance company that the money he lost to the Princess went down with the ship, she immediately starts talking of the new 'clothes and things' they'll be able to buy. (Incidentally, the sort of 'pessimistic' insight into intractable, amoral human nature that Hitchcock gives us here has several precedents or parallels in English fiction: I'm reminded of incidents in Dickens's 'Our Mutual Friend', Conrad's 'Nostromo', and V.S. Pritchett's short story, 'The Fly in the Ointment'.)[12]

* * *

Rich and Strange has several separate close-ups of objects that, taken together, constitute a motif involving Fred. Early on, after the couple has received the news of their windfall, Fred tells Emily that now she can have some 'real clothes'. A cut to a shot of saucepans boiling over on the stove suggests the pair's distraction, but also Fred's pent-up anger on Emily's behalf. A little later, he learns that a sea voyage isn't all fun and games, and comes down seasick. A cut-in of several empty bowls as in a mist is eloquent (a similar, if more pedestrian, moment occurs in the 1933 film *Channel Crossing*). And, much later, in Singapore, there's a close-up of the Princess's dressing-table on which are arrayed several jars and containers - which Fred brushes angrily to the floor when he learns from Emily that he's been duped.

Fairly banal in themselves, such shots nonetheless help give us the sense of Fred's frustrations. Later on, as I've said, he'll arrive at a point where his essential egotism is broken down, if only fleetingly, and he'll admit to Emily that he's scared. It may well be that in that single moment the couple's marriage is saved for good, bringing them together as nothing else could have done. Structurally, at least, the moment comes at a point in the film roughly comparable to the famous 360° shot in *Vertigo* that briefly unites Scottie and Judy in total 'togetherness'.

Prior to that, there have been other structural parallels to *Vertigo*. If Fred's falling for the bogus princess anticipates Scottie's susceptibility to Madeleine (really Judy playing the part of Madeleine), then the perpetual spinster Miss Imery has an approximate equivalent in *Vertigo*'s Midge. Hitchcock is cruel to both of the latter, while recognising their pain. Consider Miss Imery's line to Commander Gordon (someone else who manages to snub her), 'What a perfect gentle knight

you are, Commander'. Or the self-mockery implicit in her fancy-dress character of Bo Peep, comparable to Midge's painting the parodic portrait of herself as Madeleine.

There's a memorable gag in which Miss Imery literally bears the weight of the males' relative indifference towards her. A couple of the men accompany her, at her bidding, to a carpet-stall in a back street of Port Said, then desert her when Emily exclaims because she's just seen Fred with the Princess. Miss Imery suddenly finds herself left to carry an enormous roll of carpet back to the ship alone - a metaphor, in effect, for her whole situation.

Not that Miss Imery is the only person with problems. There's a key scene that I've hardly mentioned so far, another 'vertiginous' one at that. One evening Commander Gordon and Emily find themselves in a part of the ship that, strictly, is off-limits to passengers. The Commander is enchanted because Emily has unthinkingly just called him 'Gordon' (really his surname, of course). He speaks a line that might have come from a novel by Hitchcock's 'mentor', John Buchan - 'Just one bloke to another [, eh]? - which clearly is meant to imply some sort of desirable situation, though scarcely one that could endure.[13] (One thinks, too, of the 'idyllic' depiction of public-school life in the early scenes of Hitchcock's *Downhill*, 1927, scenes which aren't perhaps quite as satirically-meant as they may sound to us today.) Unsettled, Emily looks over the ship's side into the foam rushing past the prow, and speaks of feeling 'dizzy'. The Commander ventures a kiss, but Emily only asks 'Let's go back', a double-entendre underlined by a sudden shift in the (diegetic) sound from offscreen, of an accordion squeezed shut.[14]

'At-one-ness' is an ideal and a hope that Hitchcock's films (e.g., *Torn Curtain*, 1966) time and again hold out, albeit ambiguously.[15] But the good Catholic in Hitchcock helps him affirm, just as often, 'only in marriage' ...

* * *

Not that any guarantees are given about that, either. The sailor whom we watch at one point swabbing the decks, and hear singing the lyrics of a popular song ('My wife won't let me'), seems to harbour a rather bitter taste concerning marriage - hence his spitting at the song's end. In its way, *Rich and Strange* is the complement (and inversion) of a novel like Sinclair Lewis's 'Dodsworth' (1929), another work in which husband and wife find during a sea-voyage how non-together they really are. The fact that Hitchcock's film deals with a different social class to the one in Lewis's novel, and finds the wife rather than the husband to have the greater staying-power, only underlines the general no-guarantees idea.

Nonetheless, the ending of *Rich and Strange* has its 'mystical' shading for those with eyes to see it, and may constitute nothing less than Hitchcock's statement of faith in the potential of marriage. I spoke above of how his couple 'makes' itself in ways that may be invisible to the two people at the time; I also tried to suggest how, if they were able to abstract themselves from their several present exigencies, 'life' itself might, as it were, redeem them. To end the scene set on the Chinese junk, Hitchcock inserts a drawn-out close-up of the couple embracing against a black background, with Emily's hair swept by a preternatural wind into an almost 'Botticelli' effect. Two or three shots of transparent clouds sweeping across the moon complete the sequence. Nothing could be less true, I fancy, than critic Richard Combs's description of this as 'one [sic] stock shot of rolling clouds'.[16] In fact, Hitchcock is showing us the soul and *inner* life of his couple, before returning us and them to their mundane London suburb and their renewed bickering.

There's at least one precedent in Hitchcock's other films for this sequence. I'm thinking of the splendid moment in *The Manxman* (1929) when Kate, just before she attempts to drown herself, throws back her head to contemplate the ship's mast towering above her (the identical 'farewelling' effect Hitchcock gives Madeleine in *Vertigo*). From that, the film cuts to a close-up of Kate's composed, beautiful face, her blonde hair radiant, some strands billowing to one side. As I noted in 'MacGuffin' 18, you think of a religious painting by, yes, Botticelli - or indeed of Marion Crane's transfigured, upturned face, surmounted by an effulgence of water from a halo-like shower-nozzle, moments before she dies in *Psycho*. And in *Lifeboat*, at least one close-up of Constance Porter clearly aims for a similar, ethereal effect.

Dear reader, these effects aren't accidents on Hitchcock's part, but statements. Statements of his strongest, deepest intuitions, prompted, I dare say, by his almost Proustian commitment to rendering on film as much 'life' - both outer and inner - as he possibly could. All of which goes way beyond Fred and Emily's unthinking notion of that term's meaning. Let's not deny, or fail to respect, the full extent of Hitchcock's achievement, even in an early film like *Rich and Strange*.

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Notes

1. An axiom coined, I believe, by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745).

2. Cf. 'MacGuffin' 17. Hitchcock was familiar with both Goethe's 'Faust' (cf. S. Gottlieb, ed., 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', 1995, p. 144) and no doubt Murnau's *Faust* (1926), and with the variant on the Faust story that forms the basis of Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1890). Hitchcock had read the latter 'several times' (D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock', 1983, p. 264). (Thanks to Jason Rasmussen for having lately drawn the Wilde-connection to my notice.)

3. Spoto, pp. 132-33, gives fairly specific referents for the film in the Hitchcocks' own life, such as their own recent trip around the world.

4. I've taken the character's name (including its spelling) from the credits for *Rich and Strange* printed in the 'Monthly Film Bulletin', August 1975, p. 187.

5. Cf. the reference to 'transfer of affects' in *Spellbound* (1945).

6. They're hardly 'pretty maids all in a row', these three. Yet, if I'm not mistaken, there were *six* unattached females in this group at the start of the voyage, so that a few *liaisons* seem to have occurred ...

7. In John Grierson's 'Grierson on Documentary' (1966), p. 73, in referring to certain scenes in Hitchcock's *Murder!* (1930), he cites 'advanced play-writers' such as Rice, and also certain sound-techniques used on the BBC. Incidentally, Grierson's book contains a thoughtful, if (unduly?) harsh, discussion of *Rich and Strange* (pp. 74-76).

The protagonist of Elmer Rice's play is called Mr Zero - making him a quintessential Expressionist figure. Cinema influences on the opening of *Rich and Strange* may include German Expressionist films such as Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919) and Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924) - for an account of Hitchcock's visit to the set of the latter, see Spoto, pp. 68-69.

8. He's also something of a look-alike for (literal) lady-killer Henri Landru (1869-1922) - though of course the bearded look was fashionable enough among the French *bourgeoisie* of the time. (Note, for instance, some of the wedding-guests we see at the start of Vigo's *L'Atalante*, 1934.)

9. The image is as eloquent of dire events as its counterpart in *The Birds*.

10. The philosopher Schopenhauer (1788-1860) 'thinks ordinary existence must involve the dual miseries of pain and boredom, insisting that it is in the very essence of humanity, indeed of the world as a whole, that it should be so.' (C. Janaway, 'Schopenhauer', 1994, p. 6) Of course, Hitchcock probably took the idea for beginning many of his films with a character feeling bored from British spy-thriller writers like Erskine Childers and John Buchan, who used it constantly. But my point is this: that just as Schopenhauer developed the ethical side of his philosophy to include the notion of a resigned coming-to-terms with life's suffering, so it is possible to read Hitchcock's films as allowing for a similar, 'oriental', outlook - albeit, as I say repeatedly in the present article, not without ambiguity.

11. Something else that recent 'MacGuffins' have emphasised is the belief that was particularly strong at the turn of the century in something called the 'life-force' or 'élan vital'. The idea permeated much art, literature, drama - and film. It isn't accidental, or fortuitous, that the lordly Sir John in *Murder!* sees his task as being to use Art to interpret and comment on Life. In some definite degree, Hitchcock went on to adapt that idea to his own purposes, starting with the making of a film like *Rich and Strange*. In the process, I suspect, he developed a strong sense of life as being almost an entity in its own right - a viewpoint I wish dogmatic post-modernists wouldn't forbid *us* ...

12. In spite of everything, the father at the end of Pritchett's story reverts to his old, calculating way. I'm reminded, too, of the millionaire Rittenhouse at the end of *Lifeboat* ... (NB: English man-of-letters, and admirer of Dickens, Sir Victor Pritchett, was a good friend of the Hitchcocks.)

13. In Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' (1919), Richard Hannay meets his future wife, Mary Lamington. One of her qualities, we're told, is that she had 'the strong, slim grace of a boy' (Chapter Five). By marrying her, Hannay may be said to keep some of his own boyhood and youth - a rare privilege, we're asked to feel. Likewise, in Chapter 12 of 'John Macnab' (1925), Sir Archibald Roylance, a Scottish laird and future M.P., glimpses *his* future wife, Janet, after a rainstorm, and thinks she looks 'like an adorable boy'. Three pages later, he proposes to her, and is accepted. Subsequent books show that both marriages are successful (Hannay's especially). But my point is that the very British Buchan values *camaraderie* as much as sex ...

14. There's a comparable moment in Evan Hunter's original script for *The Birds* when Melanie suddenly becomes alarmed at where her new relationship with Mitch may be heading. She says: 'I'm frightened and confused and I ... I think I want to go back to San Francisco where there are buildings and ... and concrete and ... everything I know.' See Evan Hunter, "Me and Hitch", 'Sight and Sound', June 1997, p. 31.

15. I've no doubt that there's much of the womb about 'at-one-ness' ...

16. 'Monthly Film Bulletin', August 1975, p. 187. The idealising of the womb is probably again not very far away here.

Two lists

If you're like us, you always appreciate an authoritative list of 'best' or 'outstanding' anything! Here are two such lists which caught our eye recently. Author Craig Thomas has published 17 bestselling thrillers, including 'Firefox' (1977).

Craig Thomas's choice of classic thrillers
William Wilkie Collins's 'The Woman in White' (1860)
Victor Hugo's 'Les Misérables' (1862)
John Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' (1919)
Raymond Chandler's 'The Big Sleep' (1939)
John le Carré's 'The Spy Who Came in from the Cold' (1963)
Frederick Forsythe's 'The Day of the Jackal' (1971)
Hammond Innes's 'The White South' (1971)

10 stage thrillers
W.W. Jacobs's 'The Monkey's Paw' (1903)
Patrick Hamilton's 'Rope' (1928)
Joseph Kesselring's 'Arsenic and Old Lace' (1938)
Patrick Hamilton's 'Gaslight' (1939)
J.B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' (1944)
Frederick Knott's 'Dial M For Murder' (1952)
Frederick Knott's 'Wait Until Dark' (1966)
Anthony Shaffer' 'Sleuth' (1970)
Ira Levin's 'Deathtrap' (1978)
Ariel Dorfman's 'Death and the Maiden' (1992)

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ODD SPOT: THE LONG MEMORY

One more indication of Hitchcock's 'almost scientific' approach to preparing his films concerns the memorable wink Blanche (Barbara Harris) gives the camera at the end of *Family Plot* (1976), a film about kidnapping and diamonds.

As noted in previous 'MacGuffins' (11 and 16), a director whose work Hitchcock admired, and occasionally borrowed from, was William Dieterle, who came to Hollywood from Germany at the start of the sound era. And one of Hitchcock's most-admired *actors* in early sound films was the debonair William Powell (see Sidney Gottlieb, ed., 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock', 1995, pp. 90-91).

In 1932, Dieterle directed Powell in a film called *Jewel Robbery*, whose plot suggests a variant on the 'Raffles' stories. Powell's co-star was Kay Francis, who plays the noblewoman who falls in love with Powell after she finds him robbing her safe.

At the end of the film she gets her man. Whereupon, she looks directly at the camera - and winks.

[Thanks to Steven L. DeRosa who suggested this 'Odd Spot'.]

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 23 November 1997 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5

NEWS

[Editor's note. There's no Editorial this time. Most of the issue is given over to articles on *Rear Window* (1954) and *Rich and Strange* (1931). I've just space here to thank our contributors, who include two noted authors and scholars, Charles Barr and Tag Gallagher. Thanks, too, to Leslie Shepard, for his invaluable letter to me about the H.G. Wells story 'Through a Window', a probable 'source' of *Rear Window*. And thanks to Bruce Christopher, who sent the answer to my question last time about a couple of near-inaudible lines in *Rich and Strange*. On the ship, Commander Gordon notes that Emily in a moment of informality has dropped the title from his name, and then he says, 'Let it stay lost. Rather good, eh? [Just plain] Gordon.' Finally, readers, apologies for the lateness of this issue. Another issue, consisting largely of readers' articles, will follow in a matter of weeks. To everyone, good viewing - Ken.]

A killing

Outback road thriller *Kiss or Kill*, which has already premiered in the US, this month won the 1997 Best Film award of the Australian Film Institute.

In addition, the film's director, Bill Bennett, scored Best Director award, and Andrew S. Gilbert, who appears in the film as a yarn-spinning cop, was voted Best Supporting Actor. The film also won awards for Best Editing and Best Sound.

Rear Window in the news

Hitchcock's 1954 masterwork *Rear Window*, starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly, seems almost 'flavour of the month' at present, and could stay that way indefinitely. In the US, the film has been selected by the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress, which places a permanent, restored copy in the National Archives. It's likely that the restoration in this case will be done by Messrs Robert Harris and James Katz, who have already restored Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) in a 70mm version. The team announced in September that *Rear Window* would be their next project. They have promised to actually 'improve' the look of the film, using a new dye-transfer process which will show added detail and sharpness.

In the book-publishing field, *Rear Window* has been involved in a minor and a major event. Just out is Stefan Sharff's 'The Art of Looking in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*' - which various reports indicate is little more insightful than the author's earlier 'Alfred Hitchcock: The High Vernacular' (1991). (A brief review is included on the New Publications page of the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web site.) Of much greater moment, clearly, is the publication of Donald Spoto's 'Notorious: The Life of Ingrid Bergman'. Among Spoto's revelations: that Hitchcock based the Stewart-Kelly relationship in *Rear Window* on the 1946 affair between actress Bergman and renowned war photographer Robert Capa.

The affair began in Paris but continued in America. Spoto gives full details. 'Miserably lonely' in her 'dull, affectless' marriage to a dentist she had married at 18 in Sweden, Bergman found both lover and soul mate in the adventurous, free-spirited Capa. For months the two 'managed to evade the gossips' by meeting in New York, where they 'sat in dark corners of Greenwich Village bars, sipping drinks and listening to jazz; they cuddled in the balconies of West Side movie theaters; they strolled up Fifth Avenue at four in the morning.'

But when, quite soon, Capa reluctantly made plain to Bergman that he wasn't prepared to give up his globe-trotting career and become a publicity photographer for a film studio (as she had offered to arrange), the writing was already on the wall. It was then that Ingrid confided her troubles to Hitchcock, her current director. As Hitchcock 'poured hefty drinks for them', he easily fell into the role of Dr Brulov in *Spellbound*, and even quoted from the film itself. 'Ah well,' he said with feeling, 'there is much happiness in working hard - maybe the most'.

Whether or not something of Ingrid's anguish wasn't knowingly recreated by Hitchcock in the scripts for his remaining two pictures with her - *Notorious* (1946) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) - it's now evident that he never forgot about the Bergman-Capa affair, and that in 1954 he transferred its basic poignancy to his film *Rear Window*.

Charles Barr on Hitchcock's *Rich and Strange* (1931)

It is a commonplace of Hitchcock criticism to characterise *Rich and Strange* as a film that was particularly personal to the director and his wife/collaborator, Alma Reville. Its story of a naive young married couple has evident parallels with their own; the characters' names, Fred and Emily, are suggestively close to Alfred and Alma; and they both have screenplay credits. Gene D.Phillips (in 'Alfred Hitchcock', 1984) refers to it as an 'original screenplay', following the lead of John Russell Taylor's authorised biography ('Hitch', 1978); Taylor describes it there as *a story originally conceived for the screen, with Hitchcock himself developing a 'theme' by Dale Collins*. Donald Spoto, in his much fuller biography of 1983, reads the film as 'a kind of open diary or a photo album based on the Hitchcock marriage'. His account of the couple writing the script together at home in the evenings is followed by this information in parentheses: *The credits mention an 'idea by Dale Collins', but it is impossible to identify him or his particular contribution.*

Impossible? - what nonsense. On certain occasions, which include also his account of the scripting process of *Vertigo*,[1] Spoto's apparently formidable scholarship - and clearly, some aspects of it are genuinely so - turns out to be as thin as the Princess's claim to her title in *Rich and Strange* itself. Leaving aside the resources of the Internet, which neither Taylor nor Spoto could have had access to, it doesn't need much time in a reference library to identify Dale Collins as a prolific, if now largely forgotten, novelist - more of him later - and to get a list of titles, which include, yes, one called 'Rich and Strange', published in London by George Harrap & Co in 1930.

The film announces itself as *Rich and Strange* 'by' Dale Collins. Many British films of the time used this formula, which sometimes referred to a previously published work, and sometimes not. The credits on the film itself, at least in the prints I have seen, do not refer to Collins as contributing a 'theme' (Taylor) or 'idea' (Spoto), and one assumes that these are terms used by subsequent credit-compilers who were uncertain what the 'by' indicated. Other title cards include 'adapted and directed by Alfred Hitchcock' and 'scenario by Alma Reville and Val Valentine'. What Hitchcock adapted and the others worked on was, as in the case of *Murder!* the previous year, an autonomous novel.[2]

Hitchcock became famous for his cavalier attitude towards source material, novels in particular. He told Truffaut, for the 1966 interview book, that 'What I do is to read a story only once, and if I like the basic idea, I just forget all about the book and create cinema'. Did the Collins novel, then, perhaps contribute no more than a basic idea? That free-adaptation strategy, however, dates back no further than *The 39 Steps*, the radical transformation of John Buchan's novel that Charles Bennett scripted for Hitchcock in 1935. It does not even apply to everything he did subsequently, and it applies not at all to his adaptation practice of the 1920s and early 1930s. *Rich and Strange* seems to me to be the closest and most faithful novel adaptation that Hitchcock ever directed. The film widely regarded as his most original and personal project of the period is revealed, ironically, as being among his least so, in terms of its conception and composition. Film and novel are so close that it even crossed my mind that the book could be a 'novelisation' of the film, of the kind that sometimes gets published simultaneously or subsequently.[3] However, the divergences, modest as they are, seem too substantial to make this plausible, and the dates seem anyway to rule it out: 1930 for the book's publication, December 1931 for the first screenings of the film.

Readers may wish at this point to turn to Ken Mogg's long and perceptive account of the film in issue 22 of 'The MacGuffin'. Here is the plot synopsis with which it starts:

> *Fred and Emily Hill, an average young married couple who live in suburban London, inherit money and decide to take a world cruise. On board ship, the experience goes to their heads, as they each make new acquaintances. Fred ends up losing most of their inheritance when he's seduced by a fake princess. Meanwhile, Emily has become involved with the charming Commander Gordon, who is en route to his plantation in the tropics. When he disembarks at Singapore, Emily makes thepainful decision not to accompany him, because she sees that Fred needs her. Re-united, the couple are driven further back together after their cargo boat is wrecked in the South China Sea. Rescued by a Chinese junk, they return home to England, having had their fill of romance and adventure.*

One small quibble: in the film, they don't actually inherit money,but are simply given it by Fred's rich uncle, to whom - as the letter from him reveals - Fred has been sounding off about his wish to break out and experience Life. In the novel, the uncle *has* died, but the timing and effect of the letter are identical; and in all other respects the synopsis is as accurate

for the novel as for the film. Moreover, a high proportion of the points of theme, structure and detail that Ken goes on to discuss are already there in the novel, right down to key lines of dialogue: for instance, the lines about gas ovens and gas bill in the first scene at home (p. 18 of article), and the on-board lines between Commander Gordon and Emily (pp. 18 and 22). Not only this, but the book has provided some of the key accompanying 'shots'.

> *'I want more out of life - excitement - adventure - change - That kind of thing!' He gestured briefly at the mantelshelf above which hung a print of Thomas Somerscales's* Off Valparaiso, *with its deep blue sea and its leaning, swaying ship....*

(p. 20 of novel: is this, one wonders, the very picture that we see in the film?). Later, when Commander Gordon takes Emily right up to the front end of the deck and asks her to look back - 'Care to see a liner in which we were passengers once upon a time?', which in the film becomes 'Like to see a ship we were once passengers in?' - the next paragraph provides a vivid point-of-view description to which Hitchcock's POV shot will correspond (novel, pp. 75-6).

Rather than just piling on the detail, let me now summarise the changes that do occur in the film adaptation.

(1) The film's very striking opening is not in the book; but the day-after-day monotony that it enacts has been succinctly evoked on the page in Fred's early words to Emily (p. 6): 'Nothing to show but twelve years' clerking at Wotherspoon's behind me. Nothing ahead of us except endless repetition ...'

(2) Likewise, the ending is different. In the book, they find on their return to England that a second instalment of the inheritance awaits them, enough to enable them to run 'a little bookshop in some nice town on the South Coast' (p 284); and Emily is pregnant. In the film they return to the same suburban home; her pregnancy is not stated, but its possibility is hinted at through Fred's (evidently newly-aroused) desire for a child.

(3) The casting of the two men is not fully consistent with their description on the page. The book's Commander Gordon lost an arm in wartime action; Percy Marmont has two. Nor does this account of Fred (p. 81) exactly summon up Henry Kendall:

> *... he was easily the most striking figure on deck - so tall and broad and strong, so much the man, so masculine for all his good looks. The years at the desk had left no trace. He might have spent them in adventure by land or sea*

(though we are reminded that this is Emily's somewhat rosy-eyed view of him).

(4) Some minor bits of action are omitted, condensed, or added. The book has no equivalent of the railway station scene where the film's couple begin their journey. Conversely, its chapter 18 is dropped, a detachable set-piece where Fred drunkenly visits a Singapore brothel. And the film elides, by a direct cut from ocean and sky to taxi arriving home, some pages that deal with the mechanics of the return.

All of this seems to me to constitute no more than a fairly minimal kind of basic adjustment, appropriate to an intelligently 'faithful' adaptation from novel to film. The basic structure, and the relations between action, location and character, are carefully maintained. Without having done a precise count, I'm confident that a majority of the spoken lines are taken direct from the page, with only minor verbal adjustments (as in the Commander's lines quoted above). This is particularly notable in the climax of the story, when the shipboard romances have dissolved and Fred and Em are on their own again.

When I wrote to Ken outlining the idea for this article, the first thing he asked in reply was: 'I'm wondering whether the shipwreck and Chinese junk episodes are in the novel?'. The answer is that they are not only 'in' it, they are there in virtually every detail, visual as well as verbal. Here are three examples, all of them elements picked out in the film for admiring comment by him and/or others. (a) The dead man they find on deck: 'He sprawled across their path ... hands still clutching the air, knees drawn up. He wore blue pyjamas ... He lay still and silent; they stood still and silent' (p. 230). (b) The Chinaman from the rescuing junk, who drowns in front of them (pp. 241-2):

> *Impassively the people of the junk looked on. The man on the rail plunged and fell head downward, jerking and struggling, his coat flapping. A tangle of rope had snared his feet and he could not escape ... The oily water climbed and obliterated him. His hat bobbed on the surface ...*

(c) The skin of the cat, pegged up by the old man on the junk after they have eaten a dish of meat with lip-smacking relish. This too is already there on the page, in what is virtually a shot by shot storyboard (p. 252).

What does all this add up to? For a start, I think the case acts as a reminder both of the lack of generosity to collaborators for which Hitchcock became notorious, and of the critical carelessness which has habitually allowed him to get away with it - how easy it is to perpetuate errors like the miscrediting of this film's genesis, when they have once been set down in print. While preparing the authorised biography, Taylor talked regularly with Hitchcock, who could so easily have put him right about Collins, but his standard line was always that, in effect, he was responsible for his own scripts; and if there was no historian, or surviving collaborator, with the will or skill to put the record straight, he was the last person to do this himself. When did Hitchcock utter a word of appreciation of his indispensable early scriptwriter, Eliot Stannard?[4] Launder and Gilliat protested vigorously and justifiably over the case of *The Lady Vanishes*,[5] and Bennett would go on doing likewise over his more extended input into Hitchcock's films till the end of his life,[6] but they were committed film-industry professionals, and they outlived Hitchcock. Collins was a novelist, not a film man, and he died in 1956.

Giving due credit to the Collins book need not, on the other hand, diminish the critical estimate of Hitchcock's own achievement. He took on the book, helped adapt it, realised (in both senses of the verb) its possibilities, made it into a Hitchcock film. This is the irony; Hitchcock had no need to keep disparaging the contribution of his writers. To see that contribution clearly is to get an enhanced insight into Hitchcock's own creativity. Following this through in terms of *Rich and Strange* is outside the scope of this article, and is unnecessary in the light of 'MacGuffin' 22.

This leaves Dale Collins, author of an admirable, and very 'Hitchcockian', novel; and he turns out to be Australian. Born in Sydney, he became a journalist in Melbourne, travelled round the world in a succession of boats, and based himself in England between 1923 and 1948 before returning home. He specialised in 'sea-going romances', of which 'Rich and Strange' is by all accounts fairly typical. The first of them, 'Ordeal' (1924), was dramatised by Collins himself and staged in London the following year; a voracious theatre-goer at the time, Hitchcock may well have seen it. Collins's autobiography, 'Bright Vista', indicates that the men and their wives were at one time friends, though it is maddeningly imprecise about dates and details and says nothing at all about the film, mentioning only a conversation, a practical joke, and a social invitation.[7] Could the story to some extent have grown out of, and become shaped by, long-term discussions between them about a possible film project, and been realised first as a novel, and then somewhat later as a film?

Such a hypothesis, unlikely as it seems in the absence of any corroborative evidence, would at least help to explain the intermittent feeling (referred to earlier) that what one is reading is a novelisation of the film. Hitchcock's interviews add to the mystery. To Truffaut, he describes a favourite scene in which Fred swims underwater between the legs of the Princess, is provocatively held there, then splutters to the surface. Truffaut tells him that he has seen two prints of the film, neither of which contains this episode, nor have I seen it - has anyone else? It is, however, there in the book, in every vivid detail (pp. 104-5). To Bogdanovich, he gave an account of

> *'my most devastating appearance in a picture': after the rescue the Hills meet Hitchcock in a lounge. They tell him their story, 'and I say, "No, I don't think it'll make a movie".'*

After quoting this, Maurice Yacowar adds that 'In the print that is available the characters do not meet their maker'.[8] Again, has anyone seen a print in which they do? In the novel, however, they do meet Dale Collins the novelist, at the beginning and end of the voyage ('a little fat man', p. 64), and the final emphasis corresponds to Hitchcock's account of that of the film: 'the story's utterly out of the question' (p. 284).

Hitchcock had, by my reckoning, made appearances in only three of his 13 (completed) feature films prior to *Rich and Strange*, so it was not yet any kind of trademark. Perhaps the jokey 'cameo appearance' of Collins in his own book (irrespective of whether Hitchcock was ever seen on screen emulating it, or whether he even filmed it in the first place) stuck in his mind, and had an influence on his long-term film - and TV - practice. The comparison between book and novel has raised a lot of questions which, like this one, have to remain open,at least pending further research; what seems certain is that we can add the name of Dale Collins to the long list of those who have materially helped to create the 'Hitchcock' that we know.

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Notes

1. The errors in Spoto's account of the scripting of *Vertigo* are discussed in my forthcoming study of the film for the BFI Classics series. Exchanges with Dan Auiler indicate that his own imminent book on the production of the film will likewise be aiming to set the record straight.
2. *Murder!* is frequently referred to as being based on a play - 'Enter Sir John'. by Clemence Dane and Helen Simpson. This is actually a novel, published 1928, and I have found no evidence of it being dramatised; records confirm that it was

never staged in London, and reference-work entries on its joint authors list it (like its sequel 'Re-enter Sir John', 1932) as a novel only. The error (assuming it is one) is understandable, given that (a) the credits on the film are not specific, (b) Clemence Dane was better known as playwright than novelist, (c) the film is not only set in a theatrical milieu but seems in many ways 'theatrical' in form. And of course once an error gets into the records, it is easily perpetuated; even Denis Gifford ('The British Film Catalogue') and Tom Ryall ('Alfred Hitchcock and the British Cinema') state that *Murder!* comes from a play.

3. The British Library catalogue has an entry for a 1936 book, 'The Man Who Knew Too Much', described as 'Novelised by Ruth Alexander, From the Gaumont-British picture of the same name, written by Charles Bennett, etc'. The same author had in 1929 produced 'Blackmail': 'from Charles Bennett's play and all-talkie film, novelised by Ruth Alexander; illustrated with scenes from the photo play'. I've found no evidence of other early Hitchcock novelisations.

4. Stannard wrote most of Hitchcock's silent films. A massively prolific craftsman, son of a comparably prolific novelist (Henrietta Stannard, whose *nom de plume* was John Strange Winter), he seems to have disappeared without trace in the early 1930s. No remotely modern reference work that I am aware of has an entry on him. All information gratefully received, obituaries in particular.

5. See Sidney Gilliat, interviewed by Kevin MacDonald in 'Projections', book 2, edited by John Boorman and Walter Donohue.

6. Bennett is interviewed in two screenwriter-centred collections: Pat McGilligan (ed.), 'Backstory', 1986, and Lee Server (ed.), 'Screenwriter', 1987.

7. 'Bright Vista', published in London by Herbert Jenkins Ltd in 1946, is not so much an autobiography as a set of autobiographical jottings. Entries on Cuthbert Dale Collins can be found in 'The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature', and in '20th Century Authors', edited by Kunitz and Haycraft, New York 1942; for more extended critical material, see 'Australian Literature from its Beginnings to 1935', by E.Morris Miller (Melbourne, 1940), and '20 Australian Novelists', by Colin Roderick (Sydney 1947). Australian-based research could obviously uncover a lot more about Collins.

8. Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's British Films', 1977, p. 294, with quote from Peter Bogdanovich, 'The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock', booklet accompanying 1963 Hitchcock season (MoMA, New York), p 15.

Coming attractions

Leland Poague on Hitchcock and Almodóvar; Jason Rasmussen on Hitchcock and Oscar Wilde; Stephen Donatelli on *North by Northwest*; Charles L.P. Silet on 'The *Rebecca* Project' and 'Soul in Suspense'. Plus 'Letters', 'News', 'Oz-report'.

Editor Rudi Fehr interviewed by Tag Gallagher

[*Rudi Fehr began his film career in 1933 in Berlin with Kurt (Curtis) Bernhardt. He worked at Warner Bros. as an editor for sixteen years, a producer for two years, and head of post-production for twenty-two years. Since retiring from Warners in 1976 he has continued to work as an editor, notably with Francis Ford Coppola, and recently finished a film in Hungary, age 82. At Warners he worked with Alfred Hitchcock, King Vidor, Michael Curtiz, Vincent Sherman, Jean Negulesco, Curtis Bernhardt, and John Huston. His only film with Vidor was* Beyond the Forest, *1949.*]

Were you on the set of *Beyond the Forest*?

No, only when I was not busy editing. I always try to keep up with the director so my first cut is ready within a week after he finishes shooting. But if I had no film to work with I spent time on the set, watching. King Vidor was a very soft-spoken man; you know, he came from Texas. He was quiet, he did it intimately. He would get up from the chair and go over and talk to the actors in a low voice. He was always very reserved, he did not yell or scream, but he was determined to have us do it his way. With Bette Davis that was not easy but he had his way all the way.

She and Jack Warner were constantly feuding. When I came on the set and she asked how Mr. Warner had liked the dailies, if I said he liked them very much, she would say, 'Well, they probably stink!' She was her own woman and she was very strong, defiant when she didn't approve of something. But Mr. Warner reserved the right to decide who should play what part in what picture. Bette Davis refused many times and refused to do the part because she didn't think it was for her. Warner was very ready to put anybody who defied him on suspension and Bette Davis didn't appreciate that.

I don't know if she threatened to quit. She was not crazy about the film script. (But she had a complete turn-around later on, after Mr. Warner sold the studio and new people started running studios. I was there when she made a speech when Jack Warner was being honored by the new regime, and she didn't mince words, she said, 'Give me Jack Warner back!' She said that loud and clear.)

***Beyond the Forest* is a very ugly picture. I confess I don't like it.**

Nobody did. The only line that made a great impression on the audience is when Bette Davis walked into her house and said, 'What a dump.' Everyone was using that one around town.

Why would Vidor make it?

I don't know. Maybe he needed the money. It's hard to say no to a picture with Bette Davis.

But he made it *so* ugly.

He made it ugly to explain Bette Davis's [character's] attitude in the film. She [herself] was forced into it and she was unhappy all the way through.

Did he like it?

That I don't know. He never expressed to me that he liked it or disliked it, he was just a good pro who did the job he was asked to do.

Did he rehearse the whole film first?

No, that wasn't done. Everybody read the script at home to themselves.

How much negative did he expose?

Not that much, at the most 200,000 feet which was the average. George Stevens shot one and a half million for *Giant*. The average was about 250,000 feet for a feature.

Did Vidor sit in with you much?

No, never. I never in my entire career had a director in my cutting room, never. And they had no intention of coming. It wasn't done in those days. In those days we made sixty movies a year, and as soon as a director finished a picture he was handed another script for his next assignment. So they didn't really have time to come. And they had faith in the editors. Today it's a different story.

As an editor how did you know which take to use?

I used my own judgment—which had the best performance, which setup or angle would loan itself to tell the particular story point. It depends on the material you get from the director, the kind of story, which is the guide for the editor to give emotional reaction. It's just as important to listen as to talk, when two people talk. *Don't* stay on the guy talking, show the people listening too, because they are affected by the dialogue too. So it's all a matter of attitude. And I've been able to please every director I ever worked for.

So to what degree did a Hitchcock or a Vidor have any control over the cutting?

When I was ready to show my first cut, the director and I ran it alone in the projection room with my assistant. Then they could make any comment they wanted, and any change they requested was made the next day. With Hitchcock I was very lucky. I made *Dial M for Murder* (1954) and *I Confess* (1953) with Hitchcock. I don't think I made more than five or six changes in either of these two pictures.

He had had a storyboard, right?

I never saw it, I heard about it. I never saw one.

Would your cut have corresponded to Hitchcock's storyboard?

I don't know the storyboard.

It could have been that he planned the sequence differently than you edited it?

It could have been, yes, but he never mentioned the storyboard.

So who would decide whether a sequence played, say, in one long take or two long takes or with quite a lot of cutting?

Well, certainly when Hitchcock shot the picture he had certain things in his head. But he expects an editor to know, to realise. I read Hitchcock loud and clear and I knew his likes. I looked at many of his pictures, I was a great fan of his, and he had no problems with my editing.

And who would decide how long a take would last?

I have a good sense for timing. Before I became an editor, I studied music, I have a feeling for rhythm, a feeling for telling a story. A good editor must have that. We shot more footage on *I Confess* than on any other picture because he knew he couldn't go back to Quebec for retakes or added scenes. So I got a lot of footage, there were a lot of flashbacks and he covered the flashbacks extremely well, a lot of footage for me to choose from. And it worked.

The editor must read the director and know what he has in his mind, and I could read Mr. Hitchcock. He never told me which take to use. He never looked at any edited film until I was completely finished.

Surely you've seen all the textbooks on Hitchcock that analyze his montage and claim he composed it all on his storyboard and that everyone was simply following his plan. You're telling me the opposite of what the history books say.

All I can say is that I edited two and neither of those fell into this category. Maybe I was very lucky. We had a great relation, we went out to lunch many times, he came to your house for dinner, we became friends. It was a very sad day when he was honored by the American Film Institute. He had already Alzheimer's and he could not make a speech. He was sitting all alone.

John Ford used to brag that he never gave the editor extra footage to play with.

Well that would be very bad, if that was the case. An editor should have the freedom to put a film together the way he sees it. That's why he's hired, that's why he's getting the big dough they're getting in Hollywood these days. And they're

very important these days. They have a lot of prestige. Their credit used to be buried with eight other people; now they get their names in the newspaper advertisements.

Speaking of Ford, I watched *The Rising of the Moon* (1957) next to Jack Warner and I said I couldn't understand a word they were saying in the third chapter, because of the Irish. Someone repeated this to Ford. When I went to Mr. Ford, he was in the projection room with the editor, and I said, 'I need to talk to you about the post-production schedule.' He said, 'WHAT DID YOU SAY? I CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING.' So he got back at me.

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BLOOPERS

Thanks to Steven L. DeRosa for telling us of his slip last time about William Dieterle's *Jewel Robbery* (1932) - see 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 22. The film doesn't in fact end with Kay Francis winking at the camera but with her putting a finger to her lips to 'shhh' the audience. Still, as Steven notes, the shot is identical in spirit to the last shot of Hitchcock's *Family Plot* (1976), and that's what matters.

Actually, Nandor Bokor in Hungary was prompted by our 'Odd Spot' to watch *Jewel Robbery* when it played on one of the (German) satellite channels recently. And Nandor not only found it very enjoyable, with a feel of Lubitsch to its charming sexual references, but was reminded as well of Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955) and, yes, the ending of *Family Plot*.

Professor Sander Lee has sent us more information about the San Juan Bautista tower whose 'disappearance' reportedly so annoyed Hitchcock when he went back there prior to shooting *Vertigo* (1958) - see 'Letters' last time. Sander says that the San Juan Bautista National Park gave him an information sheet which states that the original tower was replaced in 1923 and that it was the replacement tower that Hitchcock had once seen. But when he returned to make *Vertigo*, he 'was surprised [says the information sheet] to find the tower had been removed in 1949 due to dry rot and termites'.

The Gioconda smile: archetypes in/of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954)

> *In telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton, and to do it in such a way that his attention is not focussed directly upon his uncertainty, so that he may not be led to go into the matter and clear it up immediately. That, as we have said, would quickly dissipate the peculiar emotional effect of the thing. E.T.A. Hoffmann has repeatedly employed this psychological artifice with success in his fantastic narratives.*
>
> - E. Jentsch, quoted in Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'"[1]

> *The psychological truth of the situation in which the young man [in 'The Sandman' by E.T.A. Hoffmann], fixated upon his father by his castration complex, becomes incapable of loving a woman, is amply proved by numerous analyses of patients whose story, though less fantastic, is hardly less tragic than that of the student Nathanael.*
>
> - Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'"[2]

[Synopsis of the film. There's a heatwave in New York. Roving photographer L.B. Jefferies (James Stewart) has a broken leg, and is confined to a wheelchair in his Greenwich Village apartment. Each day, and often into the night, he relieves his boredom by gazing into his neighbours' apartments from his rear window. Sometimes, too, he receives visitors. The two main ones are his girlfriend, Lisa Fremont (Grace Kelly), a high-fashion model, and an insurance company nurse, the motherly Stella (Thelma Ritter). A third visitor is Jeff's former air force buddy, Tom Doyle (Wendell Corey), who is now a police detective.

Gradually Jeff becomes suspicious about the behaviour of the neighbour who lives directly opposite. He's a costume jewellery salesman, Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr), whom Jeff thinks has murdered his wife. At first, no-one takes Jeff's suspicions seriously. Lisa is much more concerned with persuading him that it's time he settled down and got married - an idea he seems loathe to accept.

But one day things change. It becomes plain - after some further snooping on the neighbours through binoculars and even a telephoto lens - that Mrs Thorwald has indeed vanished, yet items like her favourite handbag and her wedding-ring remain with Thorwald in the apartment. As Jeff's leg is still in a cast, Lisa and Stella volunteer to cross the courtyard

themselves, in search of 'evidence'. Lisa even sneaks into Thorwald's apartment after he has been lured away by a decoy telephone call from Jeff.

Then things go wrong. Thorwald returns sooner than expected, and catches Lisa. Jeff makes a frantic call to the police. Lisa is saved by the police's intervention, but Thorwald now knows that Jeff has been spying on him. Moreover, the police want to charge Lisa with burglary, and they take her to the local precinct station. This gives Thorwald his chance to pay Jeff a visit ...]

ANYONE INTERESTED IN ARTS and ideas should read 'The Sandman' by German writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822). For one thing, it's perhaps the main influence on the celebrated film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1919).[3] For another, Hoffmann's tale provides the basis of both the ballet 'Coppélia' (1870) by Léo Delibes, and parts of Jacques Offenbach's light opera 'The Tales of Hoffmann' (1881), the latter filmed by Powell and Pressburger in 1951. Freud's essay "The Uncanny'" (1919), which has itself influenced many writers and filmmakers,[4] is centred on 'The Sandman'. Lastly, it seems to me that Hoffmann's tale offers as good a gloss as any for understanding *Rear Window*.

Here's a synopsis of 'The Sandman'. The student Nathanael becomes fixated on a house opposite his own, in which dwell a Professor Spallanzani and his beautiful 'daughter' called Olympia. Watching the house through binoculars supplied by a pedlar, Coppola, who reminds Nathanael of a sinister lawyer from his childhood, Coppelius, the student quite loses interest in his regular girlfriend, Klara. One day he goes to the Professor's house and there at last encounters Olympia - who turns out to be just a life-like *automaton* whom Spallanzani has manufactured with help from Coppola. Comically, Nathanael's infatuation with Olympia continues. Then tragedy strikes. Spallanzani and Coppola quarrel over their 'creation', and before Nathanael's horrified eyes, dismember 'her'. Later, Nathanael seems to make up with Klara, until the fateful day when he tries to push her from a high tower. She escapes, and Nathanael throws himself down instead. He had thought he had seen the lawyer Coppelius in the street below, mocking him, and had gone mad.

Freud interprets the tale as follows. Coppelius, Spallanzani, and Coppola, as well as Nathanael's real father (who figures early in the story) are *all* father-figures - either 'good' or 'bad'.[5] In turn, they're all associated by Nathanael with the figure from nursery-lore, the Sandman, who is said to bring sleep, as though he had thrown sand in children's eyes. Consequently, they're all potentially 'castrating' figures.[6] Coppelius, in particular, because once long ago he'd laid hands on Nathanael, seems to the student a baleful figure, in whom is vested a power over people's eyesight and even their very lives.

The automaton or doll, Olympia, is readily explained by Freud. She 'can be nothing else than a materialization of Nathanael's feminine attitude towards his father in his infancy. ... Olympia is, as it were, a dissociated complex of Nathanael's which confronts him as a person, and Nathanael's enslavement to this complex is expressed in his senseless obsessive love for Olympia. We may with justice call love of this kind narcissistic ...'.[7] I assume that Olympia's 'dismemberment' - which is like the fulfilment of the threat made to the young Nathanael by Coppelius - allows the student a temporary respite from his father-fixation (though at a deeper level it does nothing of the kind). Hence he feels free to return to the sensible Klara who all along has refused to have anything to do with the 'mystical nonsense' about Coppelius that Nathanael had confided to her.

I'll refer below to at least one 'uncanny' moment in *Rear Window*, namely, the arrival of Thorwald at Jeff's apartment. But first let's note that Hitchcock was thoroughly acquainted with Hoffmann's writings. Donald Spoto records that Hitchcock's library in England contained several editions of Hoffmann, including some in the original German, and suggests that Hoffmann helped teach the director 'the technique of blending humour and horror, interweaving closely the nightmare world with the everyday world ...'.[8] This fits with what Michael Dirda writes of Hoffmann: that perhaps his 'chief contribution to the supernatural story was his grounding of the fantastic in a local habitation and a name ... the possibility that the horrific or fantastic might happen next door. Or even closer.'[9] About the theme of the automaton in several of Hoffmann's tales, Dirda says that it suggests how humans themselves are but 'slightly more complex *dolls*, manipulated by forces beyond their control'.[10] cf Will

I'd make one criticism of Freud's essay on "The 'Uncanny'". It's this. At the head of the present article is what seems to me an eminently sensible insight by Freud's colleague, Jentsch, concerning a way in which a writer may create 'uncanny' effects. But Freud himself quotes the Jentsch passage in order to largely dismiss it, in favour of what he calls his own more 'psychologically truthful' explanation, involving 'the idea of being robbed of one's eyes', i.e., the castration complex.[11] I'd prefer to say that both explanations are valid. For when we turn to *Rear Window* we may find that both apply equally well. When Thorwald finally comes to Jeff's apartment, he indeed poses a threat to the *eyes* of the hero. As

if fighting fire with fire, Jeff at that moment must shield his own eyes while trying to ward off his assailant by firing photographic flashbulbs at him. But equally, Thorwald's entrance into Jeff's room raises a question that has been latent all along: is this shambling figure an ordinary man or something else, perhaps indeed some kind of 'automaton'? And the answer the film gives is surely ... both.

* * *

Bogdanovich: In Rear Window *Kelly seems the dominant partner in the relationship.*
Hitchcock: Yes, rather. She's a typical, active New Yorker. There are many of those women in New York, more like men, some of them.
B.: Did you feel at the end that Stewart and Kelly would eventually get together, or would it be a pretty dismal relationship?
H.: Oh, I don't know - I never bothered about that very much. I would doubt it myself. He'd be off on some job, you know.
B.: He doesn't really get excited about her until she gets involved with him in the adventure of the murder.
H.: Well, that's when the mother instinct comes out in him - anxiety for her.
- Peter Bogdanovich, 'Who the devil made it'[12]

Initially, Jeff in *Rear Window* is passive and isolated, his condition matching what someone has called the cinema specator's 'relative narcissism'.[13] And, to judge from what Hitchcock told Peter Bogdanovich, not much has changed for Jeff at the film's end. The 'pessimism' of this seems to me akin to that of 'The Sandman'. Still, what I mainly want to do in this article is to present *Rear Window* in a wide context, less as some recondite allegory of the unconscious and more as the satisfying and *achieved* piece of entertainment-filmmaking it surely is. The nuance of 'the uncanny' is only a part of it.

To put that a different way: it isn't so much the Freudian 'meaning' of *Rear Window* that's interesting, it's more the range of satisfactions the film offers us. For a start, then, here are the works that I see as the most basic 'sources' of *Rear Window*.

• 'It Had To Be Murder'/'Rear Window' (1942) by 'William Irish'/Cornell Woolrich (and behind it, 'Through a Window', 1894, by H.G. Wells - see below). Woolrich's 40-page story, set in New York, was the basis of John Michael Hayes's screenplay. Nonetheless, there are differences, including the story's fewer characters (e.g., those of Lisa and Stella).

• 'Coppélia' by Léo Delibes. Ballet derived from Hoffmann's 'The Sandman', but with some interesting revisions. The heroine, Swanilda, lives opposite the house of the mysterious Dr Coppélius, a toymaker, who seems to have a strange relationship with his female co-tenant, Coppélia. Swanilda's sweetheart, Franz, becomes enamoured of Coppélia, whom he watches from afar. Swanilda becomes jealous. Eventually both she and Franz separately break into the toymaker's house while he is out - but the toymaker returns sooner than expected ...

• 'Miss Lonelyhearts' (1933) by Nathanael West. Well-regarded short novel by the author of 'The Day of the Locust', with something of Cornell Woolrich's tales of urban pain and desperation about it. The title-character is a male journalist, a bachelor, who lives alone in New York in a room he calls a 'dismal swamp'. Largely ignoring his fiancée, Betty, he decides one day to reach out and give personal help to the suffering people whose letters fill his column - and pays a high price.

• 'The Daughter of Time' (1951) by Josephine Tey. Widely praised on its first publication, and ever since, as a classic detective story, it features Tey's regular detective, the unmarried Chief Inspector Alan Grant, and his chic, professional-actress friend, Marta Hallard - both of whom figure in earlier Tey stories such as 'A Shilling for Candles' (1936), filmed by Hitchcock as *Young and Innocent* (1937). But on this occasion a bored Grant is confined to a hospital bed after an accident, from which he proceeds to 'solve' the 500-year-old murder-mystery of the Princes in the Tower ...

As I say, I see the above four or five works (together with 'The Sandman') as the most basic 'sources' of *Rear Window*, and I'd be surprised if Hitchcock and Hayes, between them, were not acquainted with all of them. For instance, we know that Hitchcock liked to keep up with what was being published in the crime and thriller fiction field, and few things are more likely than that he had read reviews and synopses of Josephine Tey's 'Daughter of Time', if not the actual book.[14] I'll say more about each of these works later in this article. I'll also refer to still another basic 'source' which I didn't list above only because its influence on *Rear Window* is, in a sense, so nebulous. And that's 'Mona Lisa' - the painting and its 'mythology'.

Further, there are second-order 'sources' and/or analogues. A knowledge of these, too, helps us to see Hitchcock's film for the satisfying work it is. Here's an example. While *Rear Window* was in production, its studio, Paramount, released Byron Haskin's *The Naked Jungle* (1954) in which a theme or subtext is a man's reluctance to consumate his relationship with a 'perfect' woman. The seemingly impotent hero, a plantation owner in South America, is played by Charlton Heston; his attractive mail-order bride is played by Eleanor Parker. Based on Carl Stephenson's unremittingly suspenseful short story, 'Leiningen Versus the Ants', the film's main problem is its first half, which is quite boring. Only when an army of flesh-eating soldier ants arrives, and Parker joins Heston in trying to repel them, does the film liven up. Critic Danny Peary makes a fair comment when he says of the ants that they 'rescue the plodding picture'.[15]

Well, there's scarcely any such problem about *Rear Window*. Jeff's own 'impotence' (hinted at more than once, and symbolised by his plaster-encased leg), and Lisa's alleged 'perfection' (but she admits to wishing that she 'could be creative') are played against each other for all they're worth. In this, Stella acts as a kind of interested spectator/referee, whose *natural* bias is in favour of Lisa! What Stella calls her 'common sense' prompts her to tell Jeff that he should get married immediately. But now notice how complicated the situation in fact is. For a start, as regards Stella, her 'homespun philosophy', à la the 'Readers' Digest', is gently mocked - she knows no better! Next, it's made clear from the outset that Jeff is no ordinary photo-journalist: his boss at 'Life' magazine (or perhaps 'Look') regards him as 'my best photographer', and clearly Jeff's job gives him as good an illusion of being 'free' as anyone has a right to expect. However, he's now sunk in what he calls 'this swamp of boredom'. His phrase is echoed in two of the stories I've cited above[16] and in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' (1678; 1684) with its Slough of Despond - note that we'll consider the 'archetypal' later. Moreover, when Lisa describes Jeff on assignment as being 'like a tourist on an endless vacation', I think she's being petty! Far from being a trenchant criticism of Jeff, her remark shows a certain incomprehension and/or envy (perhaps even 'penis-envy') on her part; it's one more sign that she *isn't* perfect! At any rate, no more than he is! Also, when Jeff tells her that she herself has 'this whole town in the palm of [her] hand', her response is the just slightly ungracious, 'not quite, it seems'.

In short, I consider Lisa another in the line of frustrated, would-be *mothers* who figure in Hitchcock's work from *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) onwards:[17] she wants to make a homebody of Jeff so that he can sire her a child. In Hitchcockian code, her lack of 'creativity' equals her lack of applied motherhood. And one basic clash the film sets up - in order, finally, to evade it - involves the perennial question of where the highest freedom, and the highest good, may lie. For the Catholic artist Hitchock, he isn't prepared to rule out certain forms of sexual sublimation as the answer, even seeing this represented, I fancy, in Jeff's vocation as one of the world's top photographers (based on Robert Capa) - which in turn serves as a possible metaphor for Hitchcock's own practice of his art. At the film's finish, when Jeff ends up with *two* broken legs, and *two* plaster casts, everything suggests that he may be about to marry Lisa and thereby *doubly* compromise himself!

Now, if the above analysis sounds to the reader to be lacking in, well, humour, let me hasten to add my agreement! If we're indeed going to appreciate the range of satisfactions that *Rear Window* offers us, humour is a dimension that must be considered. I want to do that next, before picking up again the thread of 'mothering' that runs just below the film's surface, a counterpart to the emphasis on father-figures.

* * *

Clown:

Who knows the art of pleasant self-expression
Need not resent the popular decree;
He thrives on widespread appreciation,
And moves the mass more certainly.
So be exemplary in every fashion,
Give reign to many-throated fantasy,
To reason, thought, and sentiment, and passion -
But, mark it well, not without foolery!

- J.W. von Goethe, 'Faust', First Part, The Prelude in the Theatre

When I interviewed John Michael Hayes in 1975, we spoke about what he had given Hitchcock. Hayes singled out the quality of 'warmth'. He had always felt that Hitchcock was basically a 'cold' director; here he cited such films as *The Paradine Case* (1947) and *Under Capricorn* (1949). But as early as possible in *Rear Window*, he'd put in several gags. The idea was to break down the unconscious 'hostility' that members of an audience invariably feel towards both each other and the film.[18] So the first arrival of Stella at Jeff's apartment is a coup. Her opening remark, ticking Jeff off from the doorway for being a Peeping Tom, rivets our attention. Moments later, she recalls the time she'd predicted the stock

market crash in '29: 'When General Motors has to go to the bathroom ten times a day, the whole country's ready to let go.' That's the sort of line that wins over your audience, Hayes said - and got no argument from me.

Still, it's clear that Hitchcock was equal to the occasion! Throughout the film you feel its marvellous sensuousness, starting with the two initial pans around the courtyard, each coming to rest on Jeff's perspiring face as he sleeps beside his open window. After the first such pan, a cut-in of a thermometer in Jeff's room shows the temperature to be 94° Fahrenheit. This constitutes a likely reference to another film of a Woolrich novella - Ted Tetzlaff's *The Window* (1949) - as well as to the popular Ealing comedy, *Passport to Pimlico* (Henry Cornelius, 1949). Like *Rear Window*, both those films are set during summer heatwaves of 94°! And the palpableness of this other kind of 'warmth' helps Hitchcock's film greatly: more than a plot-device explaining why everyone has their windows open, the heatwave functions as a metaphor for shared crisis, and as a leitmotiv with variations. When rain arrives in the early hours of the morning, Hitchcock catches exactly its summer quality. The rain is but a brief shower, heavy enough to drive the couple sleeping on their fire-escape back indoors in an undignified scramble, yet gentle enough not to dissuade the salesman Thorwald from his several mysterious trips to and from his apartment, carrying a suitcase. Later in the morning, the rhythms of the courtyard are back to normal, as if nothing untoward has happened ...

Hitchcock's sense of these rhythms is acute. Hayes wrote the situations and the gags, but the director's own *good humour* responds creatively to every nuance. The rhythms of the scenes with the shapely ballet dancer, 'Miss Torso', are a special highlight. (Significantly, they support some of *Rear Window*'s extra-film references, such as one to Leonard Bernstein's ballet, 'Fancy Free', and others, surely, to Delibes's 'Coppélia' - to which I'm coming.) So here's the crux of the matter. I'd say that *Rear Window* represents a watershed in Hitchcock's career, along with his entry into television the following year. He seems to have absorbed much from working with both Hayes and with James Allardice, the latter being the man who wrote the wonderfully loopy and sardonic lead-ins and lead-outs for Hitchcock's television shows. Observers have said that no matter how outlandish those Allardice spots were, without batting an eye Hitchcock would agree to do them - things like appearing as a scarecrow or playing a mop-haired drummer who resembled Ringo Starr.[19] Not for nothing have I suggested in past 'MacGuffins' that Hitchcock seemed to have the quality that Keats called 'negative capability', i.e., of being able to fully enter into someone else's identity or role![20] It was, I think, an aspect of his special genius, and one which he exercised when he could. Mind you, there was a related aspect of his genius, but one not quite so appealing.

Hitchcock, as I say, learnt much from Hayes and Allardice, but it's not as if he'd lacked all warmth and humour before he worked with them! A 1930s film like *Young and Innocent* gives the lie to any such notion. But for some reason the mid-1950s sees the emergence in Hitchcock's work of what I would call a 'motherly' dimension; possibly it has something to do with the fact of Patricia Hitchcock's having recently left home to get married. This new dimension has its own 'good' and 'bad' aspects. In a 1963 interview, Hitchcock implied that humour in his films was the equivalent of the reassuring smile a mother gives a frightened child.[21] There you have the 'good' mother. On the other hand, consider the case of another famous artist who had a definite 'feminine' streak to his make-up, Goethe. Camille Paglia sees in Goethe's 'vulnerability to mother and nature' the source of his 'imperious mastery of knowledge and other men'.[22] So Goethe wasn't just 'The Clown', he was also 'The Director' and 'The Poet'.[23] And I think Hitchcock's make-up was similar, thus helping to explain why *Rear Window* is so satisfying. Hitchcock could by 'negative capability' assimilate himself to others, including both his characters and his audiences. That's basically 'The Poet' in him. At the same time, he could, by 'imperious mastery', impose his will on other people, again including us. That's 'The Director' in him. (There's a leavening touch of 'The Clown' in *both* roles, though.) And underneath it all, deep in Hitchcock's psyche, was what I'm calling the 'mother', both 'good' and 'bad', but always a source of reassurance for him, who in turn might pass on that reassurance to us, watching his films ...

In 'MacGuffin' 19, we printed Hitchcock's remark that he'd been lucky enough to have a very placid mother.[24] Then, in 'MacGuffin' 21, in writing of the Hitchcock/Hayes film *The Trouble With Harry* (1956), I cited D.W. Winnicott's psychoanalytic notion of 'the "quiet" mother' who provides a sense of continuity that is growth-conducive.[25] Crucially, Donald Spoto gives plenty of evidence for Hitchcock's emotional closeness to his mother - so great a closeness, in fact, that at least one commentator has drawn a parallel in this respect with Cornell Woolrich, a homosexual.[26] But perhaps a truer illustration of what's involved in Hitchcock's case is provided by the character Dr Brulov in *Spellbound* (1945). In 'MacGuffin' 15, I said of Brulov (Michael Chekov) that he's an exemplum for the too one-sided Ballyntine (Gregory Peck). If the latter has still to abandon a certain 'Oedipal' position, involving a false or anti-social notion of individual 'perfection', by contrast his mentor has arrived at a mature detachment allowing him to both channel his more 'masculine' aggressive impulses and draw on his 'feminine' side. Brulov is something of a male mother, what Paglia calls a 'Teiresias' figure.[27]

This is all rather complicated, so a further illustration should help. A famous scene from *Spellbound* is the one in which Ballyntine descends a staircase clutching an open razor, then heads menacingly towards Brulov. The scene is *obviously*

'Oedipal', but what I most want to note is the opposition of razor and (a glass of) milk - Brulov talks his patient into drinking milk that he has secretly laced with bromides. In essence, what we have here is 'masculinity' subdued by 'femininity'! More specifically, the would-be still-'virile' psychiatrist, Brulov, performs a symbolic (as well as pragmatic) act that saves the day for all concerned. Ballyntine is rescued for a redemptive inward jouney involving his dreams and their subsequent analysis, while Brulov has protected himself without losing face (or his life). Note that Brulov is *Spellbound*'s 'good' father-figure, as opposed to its 'bad' father-figure, Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll).

Importantly, there's a similar moment to *Spellbound*'s at the end of *Rear Window*. Once Lisa, now wearing a 'unisex' combination of jeans and a shirt, sees that Jeff is asleep - and presumably dreaming - she puts down the book 'Beyond the High Himalyas', with its 'masculine' title, and resumes reading 'Harper's Bazaar', which she obviously prefers. Being the smart woman she is, she has learnt how to have her cake and eat it. *And* she has finally got her man, it may seem.

With its good humour, this ending is very satisfying. Nonetheless, to judge from what Hitchcock told Bogdanovich, he himself didn't set much store by it! It's an *ambiguous* ending. The satisfaction it offers us comes from its balancing and rounding-off, as in a ledger, what has gone before, rather than from what may come after.

We can now see something of the film's general pattern. Jeff is a reasonably virile, very successful photo-journalist, whom we're told is based on Robert Capa (1913-54).[28] Lisa is essentially a feminine, very successful fashion model, based on actress Ingrid Bergman plus several details that Hayes provided about his wife's profession, that of a high-style fashion photographer's model.[29] (Note: Capa and Bergman had a short-lived affair in 1946, which was observed by Hitchcock.) But the film gives Lisa an additional quality, one of ruthlessness, seen when she insists on replacing Jeff's wooden cigarette box with a silver one on which she's had his initials engraved. Hitchcock felt that Lisa's character had a strong 'masculine' component. Equally, it's fair to say that Jeff has been temporarily 'feminised' by his motor-track accident, and that this has stirred in him castration-anxieties centred on the 'bad' father-figure over the way, Thorwald.

Also, though Jeff spends the early part of the film complaining to his boss about how bored he is, and to Stella about how annoyingly 'perfect' he finds Lisa - implying that Lisa further threatens his tenuous sense of his own 'perfect' maleness - the situation quickly changes. Some crossing-over (literal and metaphoric) takes place. By the time that Lisa has entered Thorwald's apartment, thereby showing an adventurous spirit that Jeff hadn't known about ('perfect' being a relative term!), he has started to feel a new *depth* of affection and concern for her. Hence Hitchcock's remark about Jeff that 'the mother instinct comes out in him'. Lisa, for her part, has become less purely calculating and ruthless, and more spontaneous and instinctive. The emergence of the 'mother' in *her* is signalled when, in the later part of the film, she chooses to wear a floral dress, one which isn't high-fashion; and nowhere is her 'motherliness' more to be seen than when she *cradles* Jeff's head in her lap after his fall out the window, the dress filling the screen almost like a field of flowers.

* * *

> *After his legs were set, they carried Bailey into the study and put him on a couch before the open window. There he lay, a live - even a feverish man down to the loins, and below that a double-barrelled mummy swathed in white wrappings. He tried to read, even tried to write a little, but most of the time he looked out of the window.*
>
> - H.G. Wells, 'Through a Window'[30]

> *He heard the door open, but did not stir himself to look. He had turned his face to the wall, literally and metaphorically.*
>
> *He heard someone come across to his bed, and closed his eyes against possible conversation. ...*
>
> *He opened an eye and squinted up at her. She had evidently bent over to see if he was asleep, and was now standing in an irresolute way - if anything Marta did could be said to be irresolute - with her attention on the heap of all too obviously virgin publications on the table. In one arm she was carrying two new books, and in the other a great sheaf of white lilac.*
>
> - Josephine Tey, 'The Daughter of Time'[31]

In the previous section, I suggested that Hitchcock plays the male mother (and 'good' father) apropos *Rear Window*, and that's a reason why the film is so *psychologically* satisfying. No part of us feels rebuffed. But I also had in mind Hitchcock's 'motherly' concern simply to look after us, to see that we have a good time, and perhaps to teach us a lesson. 'Everybody will go home contented' (as a line in 'Faust' says).[32] It's interesting to note in this respect a seeming play-on-words in the film itself: Jeff tries to excuse his voyeurism to Stella, and to an imaginary judge, by pleading, 'I love my neighbours like a father'; and Stella anticipates the judge's strict ruling, 'Congratulations - you just gave birth to three years in Dannemora.'

This is decidely ambiguous. The primary suggestion is one of incest or rape, with Jeff's neighbours the (female) victim. The point is psychologically astute, yet the wording manages to imply, further, that Jeff might more 'properly' have loved his neighbours as a *mother*. Given what I've being saying about Hitchcock's relation to his audience, I find this revealing. I once drew attention (following a hint from Robert Kapsis, commenting on Hitchcock's fondness for 'dressing up' on television) to how Hitchcock in his TV lead-ins and lead-outs was often like a respectable English parent admonishing a slightly wayward American child - and playing *both* roles himself (a boy in knickerbockers, say)![33] The fact is that Hitchcock as artist, like Hitchcock as presenter, could be a remarkably self-contained, even an 'androgynous', figure. Now, we've noted Jeff's and the cinema spectator's 'relative narcissism', which is certainly a form of 'self-containment'. Is it significant that Jeff himself isn't heard to admit wrong-doing even when both Stella and Lisa criticise his 'aggressive' spying on his neighbours?

In other words, does Jeff feel that he *already* loves his neighbours like a mother as well as like a father? Here I want to invoke Freud again: this time, his essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Freud saw in the painter of the 'Mona Lisa' a case of both 'narcissism' and of 'ideal [sublimated] homosexuality'.[34] A key passage in Freud's essay reads:

> *The core of his nature, and the secret of it, would appear to be that after his curiosity had been activated in infancy in the service of sexual interests he succeeeded in sublimating the greater part of his libido into an urge for research.*[35]

Of course, full marks to Professor Freud for telling us why Leonardo *isn't* 'the Italian Faust'.[36] Leonardo's particular quest for mastery and knowledge doesn't readily translate 'back into an enjoyment of life'.[37] (Nonetheless, both he and Goethe do share some distinctly 'feminine' traits.)

Well, I've already said that Jeff may be something of a Hitchcock surrogate in the film, though I'll suggest below that he isn't the only one. Also, I think it's true to say that if Jeff *starts out* resembling Hitchcock (as well as the film spectator), he becomes still *more* like Hitchcock later. Which brings us back to Hitchcock's 'mother', to whom the director would often turn for 'reassurance'. I think Freud would agree that this betrays in Hitchcock a form of narcissism, something which in an adult needs to be constantly 'validated'. 'He thrives on widespread appreciation', as the Clown says in 'Faust'.

As just noted, too, 'feminine' individuals like Goethe and Leonardo were driven to acquire mastery and knowledge, and this is precisely a trait in *Hitchcock* which I associate with the 'mother'. In this section, I want to consider Hitchcock's intimate knowledge of his own art and craft, of various other arts, and of things like famous murder cases, the details of which he kept at his fingertips. In other words, this section is specifically about the 'sources' of *Rear Window*. It's also about what I'll call the 'archetypal'.

Hayes told me of how Hollywood tended to treat its screenwriters badly; for instance, on location he once found himself staying in a second-rate hotel, some distance from where the rest of the film's company was quartered. He seemed keen to list for me just how much in the *Rear Window* script was his invention. For instance, he mentioned the idea of the flashbulbs. This was impressive, though I couldn't help thinking of how the 'clues' to that scene are already in the Woolrich story (where the 'flash' of a gunshot preludes what Jeff calls a 'camera-finish'). Nor could I overlook how neatly the scene fits Hitchcock's 'windmills in Holland, chocolate factories in Switzerland' story-logic: thus, if the hero of your story is a photographer, you naturally must make his camera and accessories play a part in the action ...

What I'm saying is this. Without taking anything away from Hayes's great skills of characterisation and dialogue, which in *Rear Window* includes some breathtaking double entendres, it seems to me that Hitchcock kept control. From listening to Hayes, and from reading interviews with someone like Samuel Taylor,[38] I'd say that Hitchcock may have been as expert at 'directing' his screenwriters as he was at 'directing' audiences. Then there's a related matter. I've little doubt that Hitchcock himself could have arrived at the sort of story-situations that Hayes wrote for him because I believe that the number of these is quite finite - and that Hitchcock knew this. For instance, you can find precedents for the climax of *Rear Window* in both the H.G. Wells story I've mentioned (which I suspect Woolrich and Hitchcock had both read) and in the movie *The Window* (where again the protagonist is confronted by the enraged man he's been spying on, and, to escape, must plunge to the ground). In the case of Wells's 'Through a Window', not flashbulbs but medicine bottles serve as its invalid hero's weapon of defence against his attacker. Yet the 'logic' is the same as in Hitchcock's film. Then, too, the plots of all these works feature a last-minute intervention by a third party, who thereby may be said to save the hero's life.

Hayes told me that both Lisa and Stella were invented by him, the Woolrich novella having effectively *no* female characters except the ill-fated Mrs Thorwald. Nonetheless, I'm sure that Hitchcock's initial instructions to his screenwriter

would have included one about the necessity of giving their story a female lead. Also, Lisa in *Rear Window* has much in common with Marta Hallard in 'The Daughter of Time'; Stella, as we'll see, has several 'precedents' as well. There are even similar bits of business given to all these characters. I've quoted an example at the head of this section. Equally, there's a passage in 'Miss Lonelyhearts' where Betty, her arms full of bundles, tiptoes into Miss Lonelyhearts' room, believing him to be asleep.[39]

Perhaps, who knows, Marta Hallard's profession of actress may have been what prompted Hitchcock to base Lisa on actress Ingrid Bergman? (Which raises the further question, if *Hayes* invented Lisa, at what stage did Hitchcock suggest making the Lisa-Jeff relationship parallel that of Bergman-Capa?) But let's now turn to the case of Stella.

Stella is a marvellous supporting character, quite possibly written with actress Thelma Ritter already in mind to play her. Yet both 'Through a Window' and 'The Daughter of Time' offer precedents. In Wells's story, each time Bailey's charlady, Mrs Green, arrives with one of his meals, she catches him gazing out the window at the passing parade on the Thames; invariably, too, he's clapping or calling out softly 'Encore!' as if what he sees is all a show for his own [redacted] As the story nears its climax, it's Mrs Green who, having narrowly avoided the Malay seaman who has run amok, arrives in Bailey's room breathless, anxious to tell him about the menace that may still be nearby ...

In 'The Daughter of Time', the character who most anticipates Stella is Grant's own charlady, the no-nonsense Mrs Tinker, who regularly visits him in hospital. Here's how we meet her:

> *The door opened and Mrs Tinker's homely face appeared in the aperture surmounted by her still more homely and historic hat. Mrs Tinker had worn the same hat since first she began to 'do' for Grant, and he could not imagine her in any other. That she did possess another one he knew, because it went with something she referred to as 'me blue'.* (Chapter I)

Mrs Tinker's 'homely' face *and* hat anticipate Stella's, all right. (Just think, for instance, of the latter's unstylish headpiece.) Hayes's script describes Stella as a 'husky, unhandsome, dark-haired woman'; it makes a feature of her black bag (in the film, puce), which 'is worn, and looks as if it belongs more to a fighter than a nurse'.[40] Then, too, in 'The Daughter of Time', Mrs Tinker's friendliness with Marta Hallard, centred on their common charge, Grant, matches the bond in *Rear Window* between Stella and Lisa. Towards the end of the film, the two women talk of voting Jeff in, which sounds suspiciously like a conspiracy to make him the homebody that he's resisted being all along!

Grant in 'The Daughter of Time' has a couple of *male* buddies. There's Sergeant Williams, a police colleague of long standing, and there's the young American historian, Brent Carradine, whose specialised knowledge Grant draws on in his attempt to solve the murder of the Princes in the Tower. Thus these two individuals, between them, provide a counterpart of *Rear Window*'s Tom Doyle, originally a buddy of Jeff's in the air force and now a detective, who literally does some of Jeff's leg-work by obtaining background on Thorwald.[41] Note that Grant's bond with his Sergeant is particularly tight - it anticipates the working-relationship in Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972) between Inspector Oxford and Sergeant Spearman - and thereby invigorates the Tey novel. Yet John Michael Hayes, you feel, goes one better by leavening the Jeff-Doyle buddiness with scepticism on Doyle's part concerning Thorwald's being a murderer; the script extracts both humour and drama from this.

The *Rear Window* courtyard, with Jeff's apartment situated directly opposite Thorwald's (almost as if one were mirroring the other), might be said to combine settings of the Woolrich story and Delibes's 'Coppélia' respectively. In the story, the apartment directly opposite Jeff's is that of a young couple who are seldom at home (the Thorwalds' apartment is further along, in a separate building). In the ballet, Swanilda's house and Dr Coppélius's house are located at opposite sides of the stage. Something that Delibes, but not Woolrich, may be thought of as giving the film concerns the crucial matter of characters who eventually *cross* the courtyard in order to break into the apartment of the sinister figure who lives over the way. In 'Coppélia', the two lovers who have become estranged (Swanilda, Franz) cross the courtyard separately, but are brought together by their mutual danger. In *Rear Window*, Lisa alone breaks into Thorwald's apartment while Jeff must stay behind and look on, but the final outcome is the same as in the ballet: the lovers are reconciled.

'Coppélia' has its own equivalent for the apartment-dwellers in *Rear Window*: a highlight of the ballet is a *Mazurka* performed by the villagers. Incidentally, maybe this is what helped prompt Hichcock and Hayes to set their film in Greenwich *Village*, New York! Certainly the presence in the ballet of the various villagers lends the work an extra dimension; you think of what Hitchcock told Truffaut, that the apartments in the *film* necessarily comprise 'a real index of individual behaviour ... a small universe'. Also, just as the film has its coda in which the several apartment-dwellers are shown returning to some sort of happy normality, so the ballet ends with what is mainly a *divertissement*, a succession of joyful dances performed in the village square by all and sundry, including a brilliant *pas de deux* for Swanilda and Franz.

Next, a word about Nathanael West's 'Miss Lonelyhearts'. It's likely that Hayes and/or Hitchcock had read it, given that a character in the film is actually called 'Miss Lonely Hearts' (note the script's spelling, though). Moreover, the structural parallels with *Rear Window* are striking. I've indicated above how West's short novel features an ironic theme of 'neighbourliness': New York during the Depression is portrayed as a fragmented, every-man-for-himself jungle, something which finally prompts the would-be Christ-like hero, the journalist Miss Lonelyhearts, to make personal contact with some of the people who have written to him seeking help, but whose lives he has never really known ...

But his attempt to reach out to others, which approximates what Stella in *Rear Window* calls our need once in a while to get outside our houses and look in, has a fatal result. A cripple called Doyle comes to the journalist's room and shoots him. The cripple is the aggrieved husband of the woman whose letter to Miss Lonelyhearts had prompted his change of heart, and outlook, in the first place.

West's apparent 'pessimism' is echoed in *Rear Window*. For instance, it's significant that Miss Lonelyhearts is a disaffected journalist (his difference from the more zealous Jeff isn't as great as it may seem). A running critique of the popular media and how they feed the public 'puerile' dreams[42] is striking. As we'll see, *Rear Window* makes several ambiguous references to 'dreaming', including Jeff's own.

But West implies how, if we would only realise it, there's a bigger picture. Miss Lonelyhearts knows that there's *also* 'the Christ dream', and that he's capable of dreaming that, too. Only, in his present isolated state, ever since his boyhood in fact, he has never quite got over feeling intimidated by 'this Christ business', precisely because it stirs in him 'something secret and enormously powerful'. Though '[h]e had played with this thing, [he] ... had never allowed it to come alive'.[43] I want to show below how *Rear Window* has a related theme, whereby beyond gender differences there's a reality, a true 'neighbourliness', which often finds its best expression in works of art, perhaps *including* the popular ones.

I should add that West's story is far from humourless, though even the humour has a bitter taste. Just consider the misogynistic and other implications of this sentence describing Mrs Doyle's attempt to excite the hero:

> *... when she went to the radio to tune in a jazz orchestra, she waved her behind at him like a flag.*[44]

Sound familiar? Softened, and lent Hitchcock's 'art of pleasant self-expression', there's indeed one such moment in *Rear Window*! But I'd have to say that *all* similar moments in the film are more mellow and benign than almost anything in West's downbeat story.

Hitchcock's new-found warmth and concern (with Hayes's help) are exactly what I'm talking about here. He told Truffaut that his 'batteries were well-charged' at the time, and I'm sure no-one doubts that the experience of working with Grace Kelly and James Stewart had a lot to do with it. For all the reasons I've suggested, then, Hitch was now more laid back, and his work showed a new openness to the 'archetypal' which is so often a hallmark of creativity. The male mother emerged in him. To conclude this section, I'll just indicate some more 'borrowings' by *Rear Window*, and how in almost every case the filmmakers embraced the material in apt, even ingenious, ways.

In the 1940s, Hitchcock almost certainly heard Lucille Fletcher's hugely popular radio play, 'Sorry, Wrong Number' (1943), and watched Anatole Litvak's 1948 film version (with Wendell Corey in a supporting role). The situation of bedridden, neurotic wife, and henpecked husband who is driven to murder, seems the very model for the Thorwalds in *Rear Window*. (Perhaps Lucille Fletcher had Woolrich's story in mind when she originally wrote her play, which is itself set in New York.) The play's climax, in which the wife waits alone in her darkened house for the hired killer sent by her husband, strongly resembles the climax of Hitchcock's film. Then, too, in certain matters of detail, Litvak's film anticipates Hitchcock's. Here I'm thinking of the use of a tracking and panning camera peering around a room to provide the audience with information about that room's inhabitant.

I've just said that one 'model' for the Thorwalds may be found in the radio play and the film of 'Sorry, Wrong Number'. But, equally, Hitchcock would have recognised a similarity to the real-life murder case of Major Armstrong and his wife in the 1920s, in which the Major poisoned his nagging wife and then went off with a younger woman.[45] The case had several fictional re-tellings, such as the novel 'Malice Aforethought' (1931) by 'Francis Iles'/Anthony Berkeley. Hitchcock had adapted that novel for American radio in 1946.[46] Then there was a still more famous re-telling, a short story by Aldous Huxley, called 'The Gioconda Smile' (1922). The story is so-named because of its twist-ending in which the murderer proves to be the husband's mistress whom he had spurned; when he's convicted of the killing, and executed, she doesn't intervene - just smiles. A film version was called *A Woman's Vengeance* (Zoltan Korda, 1947), and starred Charles Boyer and Jessica Tandy.[47]

Further, *Rear Window* alludes to two other famous murder cases: the Crippen case (in which the murderer kept his wife's jewellery, and was caught because his mistress was eventually seen wearing it) and the Patrick Mahon case (Mahon murdered a woman and then dismembered her body, for a time keeping the head in a hat-box). And what about the name 'Thorwald'? That comes from the Woolrich story, but in turn may allude to the oppressive husband, Torwald Helmer, in Ibsen's play 'A Doll's House' (1879).[48] Woolrich's story explicitly likens its apartment-dwellers to inhabitants of 'a doll house with its rear wall sliced away'. Naturally, too, you think of 'Coppélia', with its doll-maker villain, Dr Coppélius ...

The depiction of Thorwald in *Rear Window* is said to be based on Hitchcock's former producer, David O. Selznick. Hitchcock gave Raymond Burr bits of business that he remembered: a certain way of holding a telephone, a certain manner of smoking a cigarette.[49] But I've always thought that Burr's performance owed at least as much to Albert Dekker's portrayal of the mad scientist in *Dr Cyclops* (Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1940). That film, about a shambling Frankenstein- or Dr Moreau-like figure whose eyesight (virility?) is failing him, was a hit in its day, and almost certainly would have been seen at the time by Hitchcock. (One of the film's supporting roles was played by Charles Halton, who the same year had a small part in *Foreign Correspondent*.) Dekker's character is often shown adjusting his glasses, or removing them before [illegible] the top of his nose. The fact that Dr Cyclops has found a way to miniaturise living creatures, including humans, puts him in a not-dissimilar category to the lawyer Coppelius, with his sinister alchemical experiments, in Hoffmann's 'The Sandman'; also, of course, he's another doll-maker ...[50]

The director of *Dr Cyclops* had already made his most famous film, *King Kong* (1933). That fact may remind us of how the flashbulbs climax of *Rear Window* resembles the moment when another shambling creature, Kong, terrified by the popping of news photographers' flashbulbs, bursts his chains and heads for the would-be freedom at the top of the Empire State Building.[51] Note that in the case of all the various figures I've just invoked - the mad scientist, the larger-than-life creature from a more primitive age, the tormented wife-killer - a degree of audience sympathy attaches itself to him, not unmixed with fascinated horror. You could easily say that there's something 'uncanny' about these figures, so unlike yet also like ourselves.

Finally, let me cite a 1990 article, "Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* as Critical Allegory", by George E. Toles, which suggests that 'Thorwald's crime has an almost Orphic power'.[52] I'll come to what Toles means, but first I'd like to make an assertion of my own that the spirit of Orpheus, the legendary poet who could move even inanimate things by his music, does indeed preside over *Rear Window*. Orpheus was the great uniter or *re*-uniter. Moreover, it seems to me that Hitchcock's 'motherly' aspect does perform an Orphic role in this film. That's why the idea Hitchcock described to Truffaut, of having the composer-character's efforts culminate in the performance of a completed song during the coda, is so apt: we see, and experience, at this moment the triumph of 'neighbourliness', even as we hear the strains of 'Mona Lisa' ringing around the film's courtyard. The scene is very satisfying in its literal 'completeness', even though we sense that it can't possibly last ...

Orpheus, an essentially Apollonian figure, was killed and *dismembered* by the Maenads, with whom he'd often consorted, and who, being female, were Dionysian figures. But it's said that his head went on singing for a time afterwards. Now, in the dismemberment of Mrs Thorwald in *Rear Window*, I see perhaps just one specific classical allusion - to the slaying and beheading of the Gorgon, Medusa! - yet I think we may also sense here a *parody* of the sort of 'sacrifice' that an artist, such as Orpheus, may be called on to make, for the sake of both his art and his community. How does this fit with George Toles's comment that 'Thorwald's crime has an almost Orphic power'?

Toles means, firstly, that all these city-dwellers in their separate apartments (or compartments) lead essentially dingy, alienated lives; to give the idea, he cites some of the imagery of T.S. Eliot's 'Preludes' and 'Morning at the Window'.[53] (For my part, I'm reminded of West's 'Miss Lonelyhearts', plus the echo of Eliot's 'The Waste Land' at the start of *North by Northwest*.)[54] Next, he thinks that what 'provides a hidden agenda for all the aimless energy exhibited by ... this non-comunity' is - rage. (Which accords with, for example, the 'quiet desperation' shown by Fred, an office-worker and suburbanite, early in the 1931 Hitchcock film *Rich and Strange*.)[55] Thus Thorwald's dismemberment of his wife's body becomes 'a correlative for visual fragmentation' and a general frenzy; and '[t]he scattered remnants issuing from his murderous rage might be said to *re-constitute* the life of the building'.[56]

I find this idea compelling. For one thing, it helps to explain the audience's mixture of sympathy and *fascinated* horror when Thorwald materialises in Jeff's room: Thorwald is *our* neighbour, too! And, as noted, he's also a father-figure, albeit a 'bad' one, and we *all* have fathers, don't we? In turn, I'd evoke a further bit of mythology: in *Spellbound*, the 'bad' father-figure, Dr Murchison, resembles fertility myth's aging 'King of the Wood', someone who must be forced to 'abdicate' for the general good of the community ...[57]

Summing up. Yes, Thorwald's crime 'has an almost Orphic power'. His murdered wife is a scapegoat for the general rage that lurks behind each façade - though she herself, in her (feigned?) invalidism, had made no noticeable effort to be more 'neighbourly'. But then, you could say the same about Jeff, another invalid. As a voyeur, he is *in* the neighbourhood, but hardly a part *of* it. Especially at first, he quite literally fancies himself free, and wants to keep things that way. He's still a narcissist. Yet, by the same token, he's essentially no different from everybody else. I find it significant that, at one point, when Jeff speculates out loud that Thorwald is apparently going to leave his wife, Lisa says 'I don't care'. And that, at the end, we hear Stella make the reflex remark that she 'wants no part of' Mrs Thorwald.

Nonetheless, the spirit of Orpheus finally prevails after Thorwald himself has become *another* scapegoat. Significantly, the latter might almost have been Jeff. Now, I've suggested that Jeff, a photographer, is a surrogate for Hitchcock. But there's at least one other person who also fits that role, and that's the composer/songwriter. The evolution of his composition, 'Mona Lisa', corresponds to the unfolding of the film on the screen, which in turn corresponds to the maturing of Jeff and Lisa's relationship. And it's in the composer's apartment that we see Hitchcock make his 'cameo' appearance, winding a clock - note the emphasis again on winding and *un*winding. If, arguably, there's something of all of the film's characters in Hitchcock, no less is there something of Hitchcock in all of those characters! My point - but it's really Hitchcock's - is that in this film, or just beyond it, he is present, like a sympathetic god, like a male mother, like Orpheus.[58]

It's high time we considered the film's 'Mona Lisa' subtext, and then, by way of an overview, the matter of 'the uncanny' with which this article began.

* * *

> *Mothers can be fatal to their sons. It is against the mother that men have erected their towering edifices of politics and sky-cult [which would 'transcend' nature]. She is Medusa in whom Freud sees the castrating and castrated female pubes. ... But the danger of the femme fatale is that* she will stay, *still, placid, and paralyzing. Her remaining is a daemonic burden, the ubiquity of Walter Pater's* Mona Lisa, *who smothers history. She is a thorny symbol of the perversity of sex. She will stick.*
>
> - Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae'[59]

> *Grant had been dozing, more at peace with the world than he had been for some time; history was, as Matron had pointed out, an excellent way of acquiring a sense of perspective.*
>
> - Josephine Tey, 'The Daughter of Time'[60]

In *Vertigo* (1958), Hitchcock invests Madeleine (Kim Novak) with traits of 'archetypal' women in legend and fiction: for example, several of Madeleine's actions seem derived from those of Marguerite Gautier in 'La Dame aux Camélias', by Alexandre Dumas *fils*, a work often called 'one of the greatest love stories of all time'.[61] In giving *Rear Window* a veritable theme-song called 'Mona Lisa' (reprised from the 1950 Mitchell Leisen film *Captain Carey, USA*),[62] Hitchcock seems already to have been attempting something similar: he wanted the film's Lisa to share the ambience of Leonardo da Vinci's 'La Gioconda', a work which for 500 years has been variously interpreted, often in contradictory terms, yet is generally agreed to show 'the very essence of femininity'.[63]

That's the first thing to say. The second thing is this. Just as *Vertigo* carries a further ambience, that of a dream (at one stage, a nightmare), so too does *Rear Window*. Like Grant in 'The Daughter of Time', Jeff constantly dozes; indeed, the film begins and ends with his dozing - and dreaming. For the watching audience, this exerts what Charles Barr calls a 'hypnagogic' effect whereby we share a character's mind-state and its 'rhythms'.[64] Of course, the film's soundtrack has rhythms of its own. These are provided mainly by popular songs. But now note: several of the songs' lyrics themselves refer to dreaming. In an excellent article, "Film as Dream: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*", Robert J. Benton notes how behind our final view of Jeff asleep may be heard the film's theme-song, whose words at this point are '... if I'm dreaming may I never wake ...'.[65] But there have been other instances. One involves our initial view of Miss Lonely Hearts, followed by glimpses of several of the other apartment-dwellers: on a radio somewhere, Bing Crosby croons, 'To see you is to love you,/And I see you everywhere/ ... In the same old dream tonight.'[66]

Miss Lonely Hearts figures in a similar moment later. We watch her prepare to go out and then cross the street to the cafe opposite, where she sits at a table. She's obviously hoping to be picked up. We hear a female vocalist sing of 'waiting for my true love to appear'. The song's lyrics also refer to how '... I dream many dreams ... until just one dream remains ...'. Perhaps there's a prolepsis here of the end of the film where, as I've said, Jeff and Lisa seem reconciled,[67] and Miss Lonely Hearts and the neighbouring composer have met and seem taken with each other.

Life as a dream. That's exactly how various thinkers (e.g., Calderón, Novalis, Schopenhauer) have found it, of course. But I'd say that in *Rear Window* Hitchcock intends also the more commonplace notion: to dream is to *escape* for a time from life's trials. In the process, secondary gains may be had. Yes, Jeff is now dreaming again at the end, but perhaps that dreaming has acquired for him a new depth, not unrelated to his encounter with the mother-side of himself, which Lisa comes to incarnate. Hence, perhaps, her watching over him here! Moreover, let's recall how often in Hitchcock, after a character has been given some indication of an emptiness in himself, he may be spurred to take a new direction. The most frequent symbol of that emptiness is an open space, and the new direction taken by the character may involve him in an inward journey, if he's up to it.[68] Let's consider more exactly what happens in *Rear Window*.

I've said that neither Lisa nor Jeff is 'perfect', perhaps not even for each other. Ironically that's because each is dedicated to a career, Jeff especially, and therefore one-sided. Stella, bless her heart, knows that being perfect isn't everything: when she married her husband, Myles, they were 'both maladjusted misfits', and they have happily remained so ever since. Still, there are other considerations. The film asks, for example, whatever happened to the saying, 'love thy neighbour'? And what exactly constitutes being 'neighbourly'? Perhaps a stimulus here was the recent award-winning short film by Canada's Norman McLaren, *Neighbours* (1952). In any event, Hitchcock's answer once again seems to involve 'motherliness' in the sense that I've been suggesting. He says, in effect, that we should all try to be more like him, the artist! By contrast, Jeff initially feels no true involvement with his neighbours. In his narcissistic state, he wants to stay *itinerant* and as quickly as possible to clamber out of the 'swamp of boredom' into which he's been parachuted. It's as if he still believes himself to be flying on an endless series of reconnaissance missions with Doyle. He resents being 'grounded', and sees it negatively, almost as 'a slur on [his] manhood' - here I'm quoting from *Psycho* (1960) because the imagery of stagnation indeed anticipates that of the unfortunate Norman Bates.

But of course now Jeff has a new 'buddy', Lisa. The film details how his allegiance finally shifts, until he seems to have embarked on quite a different mission to before, this one for life. Thus all the talk in the film about 'feminine intuition' has had its point. Jeff had first been content to leave that sort of thing to Lisa, no doubt seeing it as of much use to him as the interest in women's fashions he'd momentarily feigned. But following Lisa's comment about how strange it is that Mrs Thorwald should apparently go away without taking things like her favourite handbag, Jeff's attitude changes. Lisa sees her chance:

> *Lisa: I'll trade you - my feminine intuition for a bed for the night.*
> *Jeff (smiling): I'll go along with that.*

By the time Doyle shows up and expresses scepticism about 'women's intuitions' - likening them to fairy tales - Jeff is ready to resent his attitude. Whereupon, Lisa pointedly goes and stands beside Jeff. At this moment, we first hear the words of 'Mona Lisa', coming from the composer's apartment. It's as if 'femininity' were celebrating its new triumph. (Mind you, a reader of 'The Gioconda Smile' may be reminded of how Janet Spence, the mistress, was someone else who had felt empowered by her 'woman's intuition' ...)[69]

Make no mistake, the film is right behind Lisa, emotionally. From here to the end, the element of *feeling* is pronounced. No longer is ratiocination - the solving of a puzzle as in a detective story (a form Hitchcock disliked) - what is uppermost. The episode of the strangled dog now follows. I believe it crucial to the meaning of *Rear Window*. Against all of the film's subjective (or narcissistic) logic to this point, the camera moves *outside* Jeff's apartment to give us a near-comprehensive view of the entire courtyard. The sequence brings to their respective windows nearly all of the film's 'neighbours', and only Thorwald remains incurious. And during the speech on 'neighbourliness' by the distraught woman who had owned the dog, we finally get to meet in close-up both Miss Torso and Miss Lonely Hearts. Neither is strikingly beautiful, but that's exactly as it should be, I think. In giving each of them low-angle shots to themselves, shots *not* representing Jeff's angle of vision, the film reminds us that these people, no less than the main characters, are human beings, not mere dolls or figments in someone's private fantasy. They have their own lives to lead. A similar point was made in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), and if it isn't unambiguous, well, that's something to be considered shortly. But for now, let's simply note that just as the speech in *Shadow of a Doubt* about 'human beings' was spoken by a woman, young Charlie, and concerned the women the film calls 'merry widows', so the speech on 'neighbourliness' in *Rear Window* is given by one woman and the sequence puts especial emphasis on two *other* women ...

I'm saying categorically that the last twenty minutes or so of *Rear Window* have a 'feminine' emphasis. Let's go back to *Spellbound*. There, too, the male character, who has been relatively passive throughout (in his case, with amnesia), is asked to find new dimensions *within* himself; meanwhile, the female character, who had been 'frozen' in a certain professional stereotype, becomes the 'real woman' we've always known her to be. In *Rear Window*, every fibre of Lisa's body, in its floral dress, swings into action when she crosses the courtyard to Thorwald's apartment where she finds the symbolic wedding-ring that she's effectively always sought. Also, just as the male mother, Brulov, presides in a benign

way over the last part of *Spellbound*, so I'd say that the 'motherly' Hitchcock and his main surrogate, the composer/songwriter, preside at the end of *Rear Window*.

Nonetheless, Jeff should be seen as the film's hero. By that remark, I intend the traditional sense of 'hero', someone whose deeds enable the ordinary people of the story to overcome adversity and to proceed with their lives in a meaningful way. Basically, Jeff's story in *Rear Window* is everybody's, only 'writ large'. What his story both expresses and facilitates is, indeed, consciousness of 'life'. Consider in this respect such things as the 'rage' we noticed before, to which Thorwald gives *murderous* expression; and the piece of sculpture, called 'Hunger', that we see being fashioned by the (amateur?) woman sculptor who wears a hearing-aid (as does an aging gentleman in *North by Northwest*). Both the rage and the hunger are for what Fred in *Rich and Strange* calls 'more life'. Overall, the film seems to imply how in raising one's consciousness, in not being an invalid or a cripple, one may find or intuit the true meaning of 'neighbourliness'.[70] Also, consider the very emptiness and hollowness of the film's courtyard - the courtyard which Lisa eventually crosses on Jeff's behalf. As noted, it's only when the Hitchcock hero finally encounters and admits the emptiness in *himself*, that he has spent so much of his time denying, that his healing can begin. I see the process occurring in *Spellbound* when the heroine accompanies the hero to the icy summit of Gabriel Valley, and pleads with him to 'remember' ...

Further, consider the use by *Rear Window*'s soundtrack of 'Fancy Free' in an early sequence showing the various apartment-dwellers setting about their daily routines. The general idea appears to come from Woolrich's story, whose people 'were all bound in ... the tightest straitjacket any jailer ever devised, though they all thought themselves free'. Woolrich means that these people are all bound by habit. Jeff, who has always fancied himself free, but whose accident had triggered his 'castration anxiety', inadvertently becomes his neighbours' liberator - for a time, at least.[71] Yet probably he was never really free himself. His was an *immature* notion of freedom, a *boyish* notion. When Lisa lays on a lobster dinner from the Twenty-One Club, right in Jeff's apartment, the symbolism is identical to that in *Spellbound*, which has its [redacted] the Twenty-One Club.[72] Lisa's message to Jeff is that he's a big boy now (à la *Vertigo*) and that it's time [redacted] grow up.

But even here lurk ambiguities. Carl, the puffy-faced Twenty-One Club waiter in his scarlet jacket, is one *more* doll-like figure and, as well, a representative of the artificial high-society world of Lisa's that Jeff appears to *want no part of*. Jeff's main interest is in his job as a gifted photo-journalist, a one-in-a-million job which involves him, to some degree, in the lives and suffering of real people the world over. *And there's some validity in this attitude of Jeff's*. By the same token, the film reminds us (à la Schopenhauer, and others) that people are basically the same everywhere, and gives Lisa a remark to that effect. It's almost as if Carl were a test-case, a bit like the wealthy 'merry widows' so despised by Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt*, and defended as 'human beings' by his niece, young Charlie.

Most audiences, agreeing with Stella in this, probably want to tell Jeff that it's time he got 'a life' - meaning that he should immediately marry Lisa, who so obviously loves him. And I've suggested how the film implies that this might be a 'neighbourly' thing for him to do, and how there's much wisdom in his taking this (for him) new direction. But, speaking of neighbourliness, and of wisdom, consider next that there's always been more than one way of looking at such matters. Norman McLaren's *Neighbours*, which has connotations of the Cold War, reaches no conclusions except that perhaps, after all, 'good fences make good neighbours'. Likewise, to change example, interpretations of the figure in Leonardo's 'Mona Lisa' have always differed widely. Let's ponder those. Perhaps the most positive interpretation is that of certain Jungian analysts, who see the 'Mona Lisa' as embodying the highest form of *anima* - even higher than that represented by either Faust's Helen (whom I once invoked re Madeleine in *Vertigo*) or the Virgin Mary.[73] According to M.-L. von Franz, the most developed form of *anima* 'is symbolized by Sapienta, wisdom transcending even the most holy and the most pure. ... (In the psychic development of modern man this stage is rarely reached. The Mona Lisa comes nearest to such a wisdom anima.)'[74]

The Jungian term *anima* refers, of course, to 'the woman within', and to the possibility of a man's achieving wholeness. The main thrust of the present article is that *Rear Window* was 'directed' by Hitchcock with that possibility in view. Nonetheless, 'wholeness' isn't everything! I suspect that a part of Hitchcock held Schopenhauer's view that there's 'always something essentially one-sided about genius', and felt that his own case showed that! Certainly Walter Pater (1839-1894), a famous exponent of 'art for art's sake', saw the 'Mona Lisa' in quite a *sinister* light. Now, if it's the 'smothering' effect of the mother that we're talking about when we invoke Pater,[75] then surely we must recall the ending of the very next film that Hitchcock made, *To Catch a Thief* (1955), again scripted by Hayes. That film ends on a sinister note indeed, when the Grace Kelly character, Frances, tells her new husband, John (Cary Grant), that she'll be bringing her mother with her to visit, indefinitely it seems.

Next, consider again *Rear Window*'s final scene, and the business of Lisa's choice of reading-matter. By appearing to read 'Beyond the High Himalayas', Lisa seems to indicate that she's prepared 'go along with' Jeff's right to continue his

Note, by the way, that his room is full of mementos of the places he's visited. Those mementos are both 'Oriental' and 'Occidental' (or Third World). For instance, on a wall are what I take to be African fertility symbols, whose ambiguous presence fits the general ambiguity we're discussing here.

But then Lisa takes up 'Harper's Bazaar' instead. That's no Middle Eastern bazaar! In fact, the film has already established that the journal represents one of Lisa's employers right in New York. She seems bent on keeping one foot in that camp, at least. Even more likely, she's still set on making a homebody of Jeff, thereby maybe weakening - or smothering - his creative spirit.

Was Hitchcock perhaps being pathological in giving his film such suggestiveness? I'd say: very possibly! But then, you often hear it said that artists are prone to 'abnormality'. I recall the gay Somerset Maugham's dictum that 'only the artist, and maybe the criminal, can make his own life'. In turn, I'm reminded of Camille Paglia's endorsement of that sentiment and the whole Western tradition of 'sky-cult', i.e., sublimation. In a passage I omitted from the quotation about the femme fatale that heads this section, Paglia calls the male homosexual perhaps 'the most valorous' of the Apollonian figures who would defeat Dionysian nature and become 'one of the great forgers of absolutist western identity'.[76] But I also think of the dandified Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt*. His embittered, pathological campaign against 'merry widows' - women who have symbolically *killed* their husbands, it may seem, in order to make 'merry' by themselves - is a parody of an artist's quest for creative freedom. These dowagers represent a form of what Paglia calls 'female narcissism',[77] and Uncle Charlie's killing of them is a 'love-hate' thing, one born of a mixture of frustration and envy. Frustration: because like certain other characters in Hitchcock - notably the villain Brandon in *Rope* (1948) - he would like to have been more creative. Envy: because the dowagers in their very 'narcissism' represent the condition, noted by Freud and others, for one kind of creativity - though again only in a parodic way.[78]

But I've suggested that Hitchcock is closer to Goethe than to (the 'ideal' homosexual) Leonardo, meaning the Goethe who is capable of 'an enjoyment of life' and who, in his wisdom, gives 'pleasant self-expression' to a vision that may finally transcend paradox. So what remains to be said here of *Hitchcock*'s vision?

* * *

> *The infantile conflict between actual impotence and dreams of omnipotence is also the basic theme of the universal history of mankind.*
>
> - Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death'[79]

We've seen that *Rear Window* evokes the Orpheus myth in the way a fragmented, *un*-neighbourly group of citizens becomes 'harmonised'. (In this respect, the film isn't at all like, say, 'Miss Lonelyhearts', which at best leaves such matters hanging.) The metaphor here concerns the power of art itself. Jeff's neighbours, as you might expect of Greenwich Village, include a very high percentage of 'artists' or aspirants to art: a composer, a dancer, a sculptor, a singer who is heard but never seen, and a siffleuse (the lady whose dog is killed) - and then there's Jeff himself, a photographer. Further, we've noted how Orpheus in the myth is killed and dismembered by the Maenads, though for a time afterwards his severed head goes on singing. I've suggested that the killing and dismemberment of Mrs Thorwald in the film is like a 'sacrifice' which *parodies* the higher sacrifice that the true artist may be called on to make on behalf of his community. That 'true artist' in the film - or just outside - may be Hitchcock himself.

Now, given that Orpheus is an Apollonian figure (dedicated to the pursuit of what Paglia calls 'sky-cult'), and the Maenads are Dionysian figures, it's possible to see how the Orpheus myth bears out Paglia's point that the Dionysian/Chthonian, i.e., nature, always triumphs in the end, at least in this physical world governed by sex and procreation. Paglia understandably sees the Great Mother as presiding over all. And because in *Rear Window* the 'Mona Lisa' theme likewise seems to 'triumph' at the film's close, we may easily detect there a similar general 'pessimism' to Paglia's. Art is all very well - and has its immortal masterpieces - but is still nearly always subordinate to nature and its Great Mother.

But there's another myth that we should consider. It tells of how Perseus slew the Gorgon Medusa, using a burnished shield as a mirror in order to avoid gazing directly on her baleful visage. Afterwards, Perseus cut off Medusa's head with a sickle. Film theorist Siegfried Kracauer sees in this myth a metaphor for cinema itself, which shows us truths that we couldn't face directly,[80] but notice how the myth fits *Rear Window* particularly well. Mrs Thorwald is the beheaded Gorgon, representative of what Paglia calls 'the castrating and castrated' mother (whom Paglia explicitly likens to both Medusa and Walter Pater's 'Mona Lisa'). In a sense, the film is about her, and in watching it we may perhaps be freed for a time from her fell power. On the other hand, she seems about to be 'reincarnated' in Lisa Fremont ...

Robert J. Benton has indeed likened Mrs Thorwald to the Castrating Woman. He notes:

> *She apparently feigns illness (or exaggerates and uses her real illness) to reduce her husband to a servant and to refuse to have sex with him (implied in the first scene in which we see her); and when he telephones his girlfriend she eavesdrops, and then, rather than getting angry, she ridicules him.*[80]

Benton explains 'Jeff's fascination with her mutilation' by noting how Jeff fears that Lisa will 'dis-member' him, too.[81] This accords with Freud's note, in his essay on "The 'Uncanny'", that '[d]ismembered limbs, a severed head ... have something peculiarly uncanny about them'; they indicate 'proximity to the castration complex'.[82]

We've come rather more than full-circle from the note on Hoffmann's 'The Sandman' with which we began. As I see the matter, Jeff in *Rear Window* is like the student Nathanael in 'The Sandman' because both fear 'castration' by *father*-figures (Thorwald, Coppelius), and both are rendered 'impotent' by that fear. They both become fixated on the father-figure who lives directly over the way (in 'The Sandman', that's Coppelius's associate, Spallanzani), and on his relation to his wife or 'daughter' (Mrs Thorwald, Olympia). So preoccupied do both Jeff and Nathanael become with 'looking', that both resort to the use of binoculars. The latter is at once a symbol of castration-anxiety (fear of being castrated = fear of being blinded) and a talisman against what is feared. In their state of absorption or 'dreaming' (note the very title of 'The Sandman'), both Jeff and Nathanael are indulging in a form of 'narcissism', i.e., Mrs Thorwald and Olympia are mother-figures with whom the 'regressed' Jeff and Nathanael respectively are 'in love' (I explain this below). Thus both Jeff and Nathanael are cast as potential rivals of their respective 'fathers'.

But a related way of describing both *Rear Window* and 'The Sandman' is to say that they re-enact the 'primal scene'. Just [illegible] hinges on the question that Jeff asks Thorwald in a note, 'What have you done with her?' (given enormous emphasis by a downward crane-shot), so 'The Sandman' harks back to events Nathanael half-remembers from his [illegible] which he'd been sent to bed early by his mother because Coppelius was coming. We're told that the 'clandestine alchemical experiments' that Coppelius and Nathanael's father performed at such times 'were bound to displease' Nathanael's mother. In other words, in both cases an adult's act of snooping serves to re-enact the time when as a child he'd seen or heard his father doing something at night that had 'pained' his mother (or so the child had thought). This is the 'primal scene' which is inextricably linked to the Oedipal phase of a child's development.[84] Quite rightly, Benton notes that Jeff's interest in Mrs Thorwald's fate has a lot to do with whether she 'really has been "mutilated," that is, castrated'.[85] Thus Mrs Thorwald, whom we've just seen to be the Castrating Woman, is also the the *Castrated* Woman!

I've several times referred to 'narcissism'. Freud sees Nathanael's fixation on Spallanzi's household as reactivating the student's 'feminine attitude towards his father in infancy'; and he notes that Hoffmann's own family had been deserted by the father when Hoffmann was just three years old.[86] Likewise, Freud says of Leonardo da Vinci that his life and work showed strong marks of narcissism and mother-identification:[87] '[h]is illegitimate birth [had] deprived him of his father's influence until perhaps his fifth year, and left him open to the tender seductions of a mother whose only solace he was'.[88] What I'm suggesting about Jeff in *Rear Window* is that his confinement to a wheel-chair has made *him* feel 'feminised' in a decidedly Oedipal, or pre-Oedipal, way; hence his readiness to become fixated on Thorwald's relation to his wife. Moreover, Jeff naturally soon begins to feel in 'competition' with this father-figure. Note that Mrs Thorwald is something of a look-alike for Lisa (and vice versa), implying how easy it is for Jeff to transfer part of his fixation onto her, too. However, towards the end of the film, Lisa re-asserts her own warm, lively femininity and at the same time shows by her actions that *she* at any rate hasn't been 'castrated' - thereby in every sense helping to undo the Thorwalds' power over Jeff. At the film's end, Jeff is free to establish his own flesh-and-blood relationship to a wife and 'mother-figure'[89] by getting married himself, though for reasons already discussed he may come to regret it. After all, two broken legs implies a man *twice*-'castrated'!

But now note: the interregnum that prevails with the overthrow of Thorwald represents the best of two worlds - neither too masculine nor yet too feminine, and thus perhaps something that only art or a perfect marriage can bestow! Its main emblem in a Hitchcock film may be the 'motherly' (as well as 'fatherly') presence of Hitchcock himself, who invariably makes a cameo appearance as a palpable reminder to us that he's in control. So in this film it's *Hitchcock* who finally defeats both the 'castrating' father-figure on the one hand, and the all-too-fecund, too-earthly Great Mother on the other hand, at least for now. I think again of Goethe, another highly creative individual who had a close relation with his mother,[90] and whose work is designed to offer a satisfying completeness. Also, in placing weight on (feminine) intuition and more 'life', Hitchcock and his film may recall the work of the vitalist philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941), who saw intuition as a form of creative *re*-membering ...[91]

I've suggested that Freud's notion of 'the uncanny' throws considerable light on Jeff's 'impotent' condition. Even so, in the film that condition is ambiguous: is it 'caused' by Jeff's recent regression to a stage of 'relative narcissism' (echoing

the film spectator's), or did it pre-exist his injury? The answer would seem to be: a bit of both. Stella says that *she's* not shy (she's 'been looked at before'), but you have to wonder about Jeff, for all his intrepid dashing around the world's trouble-spots! Suitably, the very symbol of Jeff's impotence, viz, his plaster-enclosed leg often sticking straight out in front of him, is ambiguous, too. But perhaps, for a photographer whose art involves a degree of sublimation, and personal 'sacrifice', such ambiguity is just what we should expect.

In any case, there's a truly universal meaning for Jeff's condition. As Norman O.Brown says, we are all *born* 'impotent' and then spend our lives 'dreaming' of overcoming our predicament (that is, when we're not effectively denying it or [redacted]. That's the essence of *Vertigo*, where again the James Stewart character must come to terms with a personal weakness that's been with him all along.[92] Though the theme receives its most tragic and devastating expression in that film, the 'archetypal' content is nonetheless also strong in *Rear Window*.

Finally, speaking of archetypal content, let's recall the particular criticism that I made of Freud at the start of this article, where I suggested that psychology - at least in a narrow Freudian sense - isn't the sole basis of 'the uncanny'. Take the shambling figure of Lars Thorwald in *Rear Window*. We've seen that he has 'predecessors' in various works: the toymaker in 'Coppélia',[93] the scientist who shrinks animals and finally people in *Dr Cyclops*, the creature in *King Kong*, the Malay seaman who runs amok in 'Through a Window', the cripple in 'Miss Lonelyhearts', and perhaps even the historical villain, Henry VII, in 'The Daughter of Time'. A point of interest about these figures is that *either* they seek to get the better of life and/or history (Dr Coppélius, Dr Cyclops, Henry VII) *or* they are driven to take a step which shows that life has become rather too much for them (Kong, the Malay seaman, the cripple). But Thorwald partakes of both types: driven beyond endurance by his wife's nagging, etc., he murders her, then makes a bid for happiness by cunningly disposing of her body and making arrangements to leave town with his mistress. (Precedents here include the real-life Major Armstrong and his fictional equivalents such as the husbands in 'Malice Aforethought' and 'The Gioconda Smile'.)

A comment by crime-fiction authority and author H.R.F. Keating about 'The Daughter of Time' applies to virtually all of the works just mentioned. He notes that Josephine Tey faced a problem common to writers of whodunnits everywhere: the need to tell a story in an ongoing way. Keating writes: 'It needs really only one starburst of inspiration by the detective to see how the murder was done and to end the book. So great pains must be taken to spin out the situation ...'.[94] He compliments Tey for 'adroitly delaying the facts Grant needs to build up his case against Henry VII'.

To the extent that Freud's colleague Jentsch makes a practically identical point about the mechanics of Hoffmann's tales - see the quote that heads the present article - it might seem that he has mistaken the 'uncanny' for mere delay/suspense. After all, nobody is suggesting that 'The Daughter of Time' is an 'uncanny' work. To better see what I mean, replace Jentsch's phrase 'a human being or an automaton' with the phrase 'a murderer'. Fairly clearly, the resultant text describes all manner of whodunnits, plus *Rear Window*.

Okay, but now put back the word 'automaton'. And, for the sake of argument, consider again how Thorwald partakes of all those crazy and/or crazed figures who shamble and/or lunge their way through the works mentioned - even though *not* all of them (e.g., the Malay, the cripple) are noticeably father-figures in the sense specified by Freud in his essay on "The 'Uncanny'". Also, recall Michael Dirda's remark about how so many of Hoffmann's tales show people who are little more than 'complex dolls, manipulated by forces beyond their control'. Well, in keeping with the other ambiguities of *Rear Window*, it seems to me that Hitchcock tells us that *all* of the apartment-dwellers, male and female, who live over the way from Jeff's own apartment, are both human beings and have something doll-like about them.[95] In a sense, they're *all* automatons. And Lars Thorwald is one such, besides being the castrating-figure that Freud would point to. In short, I'm suggesting that though Freud's theory of 'the uncanny' certainly fits *Rear Window*, it doesn't exhaustively explain the film's uncanniness - let alone its rich and satisfying power to entertain us.

For instance, there's a whole 'archetypal' dimension to the film that perhaps has less of the father, and more of the mother, about it. The warmer, more embracive Hitchcock of *Rear Window* wears an ambiguous Gioconda smile, but a smile nonetheless.

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Notes

1. Quoted in S. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), in The Pelican Freud Library, Vol. 14 (1985), pp. 347-48.
2. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 354n. Note my amended spelling of 'Nathanael', which is the version I'm most familiar with from reading editions of Hoffmann. Freud's text has 'Nathaniel' throughout.

3. For example, the sinister lawyer Coppelius in Hoffmann's tale seems the antecedent of Caligari himself. (However, the *physical appearance* of Caligari was modelled on a photograph of the philosopher Schopenhauer - see 'MacGuffin' 2, p. 5.) Certainly Hoffmann exerted a deep influence on German Expressionist cinema generally. In this respect, note Lotte Eisner's comments on '[t]he demoniac bourgeois' in 'The Haunted Screen' (English translation, 1969), pp. 106-09.
4. There was even a British-Canadian film actually called *The Uncanny* (1977). Very relevant to the present article is this remark by S.S. Prawer in her excellent book (reviewed in 'MacGuffin' 2) called 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' (1980), in its chapter on "The Uncanny": 'It would have been surprising if film-makers in search of fantastic *frissons* had neglected the help which they felt Freudians could give them in their exploration of the personal, and Jungians in their exploration of the "collective", unconscious.' (p. 124)
5. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", pp. 353-54n.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Donald Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 71.
9. M.D., "Hoffmann", in Jack Sullivan (ed.), 'The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural' (1986), p. 204.
10. M.D., "Hoffmann", p. 205.
11. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 351.
12. P. Bogdanovich, 'Who the devil made it' (1997), pp. 522-23.
13. Robert Stam and Roberta Pearson, "Hitchcock's *Rear Window*: Reflexivity and the Critique of Voyeurism" (originally 1983), reprinted in M. Deutelbaum and L. Poague (eds), 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986), pp. 193-206, at p. 197.
14. For a well-documented account of how Hitchcock knew about another top British crime-fiction writer of the 1940s and 1950s, 'Edmund Crispin'/Bruce Montgomery, whose work he 'plagiarised' on at least two occasions, see Richard Valley, "The Trouble With Hitchcock: *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train* Investigated", in 'Scarlet Street' 21, Winter 1996, pp. 61-65. And for information on Hitchcock's familiarity with H.G. Wells and his work (the latter in a complete set of first editions which Hitchcock owned), see Spoto, passim. Note that Wells's 'Through a Window' was first included in a book when it appeared in 'The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents', 1894. Hitchcock knew Wells personally. To read a memorable account of the time Hitchcock accompanied Wells on a train trip from London to Brighton, see John McCarty's "Postscript" to the book he co-authored with Brian Kelleher, 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' (1985), p. 331.
15. D. Peary, "*Naked Jungle, The*", in 'Guide for the Film Fanatic' (1986), p. 291.
16. In Woolrich's story, Jeffries (note spelling) says that he's 'stewing in a vacuum of total idleness'.
17. See 'MacGuffin' 22, pp. 19-20.
18. Compare what Hayes says on this matter to Richard Valley in 'Scarlet Street' 21, p. 92. (The interview, on pp. 90-94, 97, is called "The Hayes Office"; it was concluded in 'Scarlet Street' 22.) Also, compare what I say in the present article about the spectator's - and Jeff's - initial 'relative narcissism'. My contention is that the film sets out to give us at least a glimpse of the true meaning of 'neighbourliness', and that 'good humour' is very much a part of what's involved in breaking down our resistance.
19. Norman Lloyd, quoted in McCarty & Kelleher, p. 39. Lloyd repeated this point in a recent interview for the 'Los Angeles Times'.
20. I think that I originally suggested this in connection with Hitchcock's ability to enter imaginatively into certain of his characters, including his villains (who might be either gay or straight). But I see plenty of additional evidence for such 'negative capability' on Hitchcock's part, starting with the mentioned TV lead-ins and lead-outs. Even Hitchcock's facility at 'forging' other people's signatures (see 'MacGuffin' 22, p. 16) might be cited, I think. Also, I'm aware of Hitchcock's great closeness to animals. At least twice in his career, he had the misfortune to see an animal run over while he was working at the studio. Both times, he was reportedly upset for days afterwards.
21. See 'MacGuffin' 22, p. 12. Worth mentioning, too, may be Hitchcock's Catholicism, with its emphasis on the Virgin Mary and qualities like compassion and caring.
22. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson' (1991), p. 258. Paglia adds that Goethe actually *feared* to come near to his mother because of her 'too strong a personality ... lest he be reabsorbed into her gravitational field and returned to childhood dependency.' And on the related matter of how most of Goethe's relations with women ended in sexual renunciation, Paglia tells us that '[h]eterosexuality for men will always carry the danger of loss of identity'. I talk about these things in the text.
23. These are the participants in the three-way dialogue in 'Faust', First Part, The Prelude in the Theatre.
24. 'MacGuffin' 19, p. 19.
25. 'MacGuffin' 21, p. 19 and passim.
26. See Jean Sered, "The Dark Side", in 'Armchair Detective' 22, No. 2, Spring 1989, pp. 116-135, and especially the section "Marriage, Sex and Oedipus Rex", pp. 120-23. (The article is concluded in 'Armchair Detective' 22, No. 3.) As Sered puts the matter, both Hitchcock and Woolrich 'were dominated by their mothers for far too long - Woolrich, in fact, exclusively and all his life, until his mother's death when he was in his fifties' (p. 120). My point concerning Hitchcock would be that he both drew on his emotional closeness to his mother and more or less knowingly reacted against it, producing the two aspects of his filmmaking that I've described as 'negative capability' and 'imperious mastery'.

27. In my article on *Spellbound* in 'MacGuffin' 15, I suggested that Brulov becomes more of the detached 'male mother' (or 'male wife') as the film advances, thus bearing out what he'd told Ballyntine, that 'any husband of Constance is a husband of mine, so to speak'. Another instance of the male mother, closer to Paglia's conception of him as a 'Teiresias' figure, is, I suggestd in 'MacGuffin' 15, the blind Philip Martin in *Saboteur* (1942). See especially p. 21, n.15. Also, see Paglia, pp. 45-46.
28. The claim that the Jeff-Lisa relationship was based on Robert Capa's affair with Ingrid Bergman is made by Donald Spoto in 'Notorious: The Life of Ingrid Bergman' (1997). The affair itself has long been known about. For instance, it's mentioned in passing in Charles Higham and Roy Moseley's 'Cary Grant: The Lonely Heart' (1990), p. 216.
29. 'Scarlet Street', 21, p. 92.
30. This is the opening sentence of Wells's story. I'm immensely grateful to Leslie Shepard for drawing the story to my attention.
31. J. Tey, 'The Daughter of Time' (1951), Chapter I.
32. Spoken by The Director. See 'Faust', First Part, The Prelude in the Theatre.
33. K. Mogg, review of R. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992), in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1993 edition, p. 104.
34. S. Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood' (1910; English translation 1957; Ark paperback edition 1984), pp. 48, 28.
35. Ibid., p. 28.
36. Ibid., p. 22.
37. Ibid.
38. The interview with Samuel Taylor I'm thinking of is the one in Dan Auiler's forthcoming 'Hitchcock's *Vertigo*: The Making of a Classic' (St Martin's Press), in which Taylor refers to Hitchcock's 'influence over the screenplay, without [our] ever talking about it [directly]'.
39. See the chapter called "Miss Lonelyhearts in the dismal swamp".
40. John Michael Hayes, 'Rear Window', Final White Script, December 1, 1953 (unpublished studio script), p. 14.
41. I find it intriguing that while *Rear Window* is about solving a murder across a *physical* distance, i.e., the film's courtyard, 'The Daughter of Time' is about solving a (double-) murder across a distance in *time* ...
42. See especially the chapter called "Miss Lonelyhearts returns".
43. See the chapter "Miss Lonelyhearts and the lamb".
44. "Miss Lonelyhearts pays a visit".
45. See K.M.M., "Murder in a Small Town", 'MacGuffin' 17, pp. 10-13.
46. The air-date is sometimes given as 1945, but internal evidence in the program suggests to me that 1946 is more likely. For more on Hitchcock's interest in Iles's story, see Martin Grams, Jr, "Murder and *Suspense*: Hitchcock's Established Reputation", located on the Alfred Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web site.
47. For more on 'The Gioconda Smile', a work clearly pertinent to the ambivalence shown by *Rear Window* to its 'perfect' woman, (Mona) Lisa, see K.M.M., op. cit., pp. 11-12.
48. Compare Robert J. Benton, "Film As Dream: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*", in 'The Psychoanalytic Review', Vol. 71, No. 3, 1984, p. 485.
49. John Belton, "Dexterity in a Void: The Formalist Esthetics of Alfred Hitchcock", 'Cineaste', Vol. X, No. 3, Summer 1980, p. 11.
50. As I say in the text, Dr Cyclops is a Frankenstein-like figure. Literary writers and scholars have often drawn parallels between Mary Shelley's Dr Frankenstein and E.T.A. Hoffmann's Dr Coppelius, with his alchemical experiments.
51. Compare Stam & Pearson, p. 201, who note that when Thorwald comes to Jeff's apartment, he 'becomes the ambulatory embodiment of filmic displeasure. King Kong is unchained and attacking the audience.'
52. G.E. Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* as Critical Allegory", in 'boundary 2', 16, No. 2-3, Winter-Spring 1990, p. 228.
53. Ibid.
54. On the echo of 'The Waste Land' at the start of *North by Northwest*, see 'MacGuffin' 20, p. 23, n. 22.
55. See 'MacGuffin' 22, p. 18.
56. Toles, p. 228.
57. See 'MacGuffin' 15, p. 9.
58. I've been suggesting that Hitchcock's 'citing' of so many earlier works shows in him a new depth and receptivity to the 'archetypal' (the latter discussed in the next section); in other words, it shows in him a richer, warmer dimension, which I assocate with the 'mother'. Of course, I haven't exhausted here all of *Rear Window*'s 'citations'. A couple more come to mind. The elaborate set surely has few precedents, and certainly not as regards matters of lighting. (Here, see Arthur Gavin, "*Rear Window*", in 'American Cinematographer', 35, No. 2, February 1954, pp. 76-78, 97; this article also has useful information about Hitchcock's rationale for the lenses he used.) I think Richard Day's splendid set for *Dead End* (William Wyler, 1937) should be mentioned. Interestingly, both Wyler's and Hitchcock's films begin at dawn as the [illegible] to come to life. As for the very effective business in *Rear Window* involving Thorwald's cigarette glowing in

his darkened apartment, I've suggested elsewhere a couple of possible precedents: the play 'Rope' (1929) by Patrick Hamilton, and the novel and play of 'Bulldog Drummond' (1920) by 'Sapper'.
59. Paglia, pp. 14-15.
60. Tey, Chapter I.
61. On Marguerite Gautier, see my article on *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 11, p. 13; for the 'archetypal' in *Vertigo*, see the same article, passim (pp. 7-22); and for more on such matters, including the 'eternal feminine', see my article on *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 17, passim (pp. 14-26).
62. *Captain Carey, USA* is partly set in Italy, and the song 'Mona Lisa' serves in the plot as an Italian partisans' warning. It won an Academy Award for its writers, Jay Livingston and Ray Evans.
63. Angelo Conti, quoted in Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci', p. 59.
64. See C. Barr, "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British Period", 'MacGuffin' 6, pp. 3-6, passim. The article, retitled "Hitchcock's British Films Revisited", is reprinted in revised form in Andrew Higson (ed.), 'Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema' (1996).
65. Benton, p. 483.
66. At one point during this, Jeff silently toasts Miss Lonely Hearts who is herself toasting ... her phantom lover. Note noteworthy how, in the course of the film, nearly all of the main characters are shown drinking. The effect is to stress their common humanity and, yes, their shared dreaming.
67. Asleep in his wheelchair, Jeff is no longer facing out the window as if he'd just been 'window-shopping'. So here's another indication of his finding, with Lisa, new depths within himself. A relevant article is Sander H. Lee, "Escape and commitment in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*", in 'Post Script', 7, No. 2, Winter 1988, pp 18-28. (Another article by Professor Lee is on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web site.)
68. Three such films seem to me to be *Spellbound*, *North by Northwest*, and *Torn Curtain* (1966). The potential turning-point for Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman) in *Torn Curtain* comes in the Berlin Museum sequence, with its art- and mandala-symbolism. Jeff in *Rear Window* has *his* direct encounter with 'emptiness' when he's thrust out his window into space by Thorwald ...
69. The husband in 'The Gioconda Smile' makes the mistake of underestimating the depth of the quite sensitive and still virginal Janet Spence's feelings for him. 'Only a woman's intuition ...', he muses at one point. He eventually goes off (before his arrest) with the relatively uncomplicated Doris, another local girl ...
70. I'm reminded of how, when Hitchcock's *Frenzy* came out in 1972, the director pointed out proudly to interviewers how much 'life' he had instilled into that film. On the matter of Jeff as 'hero', note that I'm saying that he functions that way in the film, though the *unsung* (?) hero may well be Hitchcock himself.
71. Toles, p. 229, notes how 'utterly contrived' the *Rear Window* coda is, obviously by intention. The effect of it is to both reassure and to raise doubts ...
72. See 'MacGuffin' 15, p. 15. On the same page is a consideration of the film's theme of 'impossible' perfection.
73. See Carl G. Jung (ed.), 'Man and His Symbols' (1964), p. 185. My comparison of Madeleine to Helen of Troy, again with Jungian connotations, occurs in my *Vertigo* article in 'MacGuffin' 17.
74. Ibid, pp. 185-86.
75. See the Paglia quote at the head of this section.
76. Paglia, pp. 14-15.
77. Ibid, p. 14.
78. I'll say more in the text about the conditions of creativity. But a general observation about Hitchcock's films is this. Almost invariably, the films' endings appear to endorse the triumph of 'life', that which isn't sterile, over everything else. But it's always ambiguous. Thus in *North by Northwest* the relatively instinctive, all-American hero and heroine, Roger and Eve, defeat the elegant, cultured foreigner, Vandamm, who is given shadings of bisexuality and exotic, Oriental art. The implication is that anyway the loser has had, and has given, a good run for his money. Likewise at the end of *Shadow of a Doubt*, decent and quite pretty young Charlie will marry her nice but ordinary (and flappy-eared!) detective-boyfriend, thus seeing the triumph of wholesome American values over the forces of darkness and sterility represented *respectively* by Uncle Charlie and his 'merry widow' victims. Which is a nagging ending, when we recall Uncle Charlie's almost *crusading* zeal against his victims, and we bear in mind those victims' status as 'human beings' which young Charlie defined for us ...
79. N.O. Brown, 'Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History' (1959), Chapter III.
80. S. Kracauer, 'Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality' (1960), p. 305.
81. Benton, p. 490.
82. Ibid.
83. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 366.
84. See Barbara Odabashian, "The Unspeakable Crime in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1993 edition, pp. 3-11, passim.
85. Benton, p. 487.
86. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 354n.

87. Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci', p. 48.
88. Ibid., p. 82.
89. In *Rich and Strange*, Fred's wife Emily says that 'a wife is more than half a mother' ...
90. Freud's essay on Leonardo refers explicitly (p. 32n) to 'Goethe's close relation with his mother'.
91. Compare Benton, p. 497, who draws from *Rear Window* the lesson that we need to reconstruct life's 'continuous flow' by means of 'an active process of re-membering'. But Benton doesn't explicitly invoke Bergson. For the latter, see an excellent short introduction by Robert C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy since 1750' (1988), pp. 107-10. Solomon likens Bergson's notion of a 'vital force' to Schopenhauer's concept of Will (though he notes that Bergson, an optimist, believed in progress). He shows how Bergson put emphasis on intuition, memory, and creativity as providing us with the means to understand 'life' and to directly experience 'freedom'. Compare also my article on *The Trouble With Harry* in 'MacGuffin' 21, especially some of my comments on Sam, the film's artist-figure.
92. Scottie's infinitely symbolic 'vertigo' first manifests itself when he's on the rooftop at the start. 'Boy,' he says to Midge later, 'what a moment to find out I had it.' I comment on the expressionism of this in 'MacGuffin' 11, p. 20.
93. I recently watched a modernised Danish-French TV production of Delibes's ballet, and was intrigued to note that Coppélius had been made a *photographer* who has a darkroom in his apartment ...
94. H.R.F. Keating, 'Crime and Mystery: The 100 Best Books' (1987), pp. 99-100.
95. Hitchcock's film is saying that we're all both doll-like and yet individual human beings, which seems very much the rationale of how the arrival of Thorwald at Jeff's apartment is filmed. We hear him slowly ascend the stairs in the building's stairwell (compare Nathanael's childhood memory in 'The Sandman' of Coppelius's 'clumping up the stairs with a rather heavy, slow step'), and then watch him appear, dimly back-lit, as a menacing figure in Jeff's doorway. But his first words, 'What do you want of me?', show him to be a frightened, as much as a frightening, person. (*Rear Window*'s dual view of human beings seems to me to accord perfectly with Schopenhauer's two-pronged emphasis on how we all partake of both Will and Representation.)

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ODD SPOT: WHY *REAR WINDOW* IS SO POPULAR IN JAPAN?

The Japanese, wrote American anthropologist Ruth Benedict in her influential 'The Chrysanthemum and the Sword' (1946), exhibit a culture of shame and not of guilt. What she meant may be seen in this message posted on the Internet by one Bill Sakovich in November 1996, concerning *Rear Window*.

'I live in Japan. [Untoward] behaviour in this country is not discouraged by a Christian sense of morality, as was often the case in the West, but by a sense of shame, and the knowledge that people are watching you. In other words, you can do it if you can get away with it. This is due partly to conditions in urban areas, in which individuals have much less personal space than they do in the US.

'I live in a less congested area, but even still, the lady across the street blatantly goes out of her way to look out the window at the comings and goings of the neighbourhood - much to the neighbourhood's displeasure.

'Need I say it - *Rear Window* is *extremely* popular in Japan. Indeed, it may have been the first Hitchcock movie released on Laser Disc here (it definitely was one of the first).'

[Thanks to Freda Freiberg for advice concerning this 'Odd Spot'. Freda suggests that Yasujiro Ozu's *Ohayu/Good Morning* (1959) shows some of the intense neighbour-consciousness that exists in Japan.]

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 24 | February 1998 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

(In view of the length of the 'Editorial' this time, readers may want to refer first to the section at the end that introduces the contents of this issue.)

IN 'CONTESTING TEARS: THE Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman' (1996), Stanley Cavell cites Freud on how the 'repudiation of femininity' must be the bedrock at which psychoanalytic activity ceases.[1] I assume that this refers to the case of a male patient, and that the 'femininity' to be 'repudiated' is debilitating somehow.[2] In any event, and importantly, Cavell has his own thoughts on such matters. For instance, drawing on Lacan this time (whom he acknowledges somewhat insouciantly), he suggests that the patient who resolves his Oedipal drama 'under the threat of castration, the threat of a third person', becomes free to know general human existence as animate and real - as opposed to inanimate and insubstantial.[3]

Such observations as these by Cavell spring from his extended use of psychoanalytic texts, including Freud's essay on "The Uncanny" (itself centred on the tale by E.T.A. Hoffmann called "The Sandman"), to elucidate a key moment in Max Ophuls's *Letter From An Unknown Woman* (1948), starring Louis Jourdan and Joan Fontaine. That key moment is the one when the man has just read the letter addressed to him by the woman, and has reacted in 'horror and exhaustion' to the images that result (which we see) by covering his eyes with his hands.[4] Cavell feels that the man's gesture is 'ambiguous',[5] because it implies that the man is torn 'between avoiding the horror of knowing the existence of others and avoiding the horror of not knowing it, between avoiding the threat of castration that makes the knowledge accessible and avoiding the threat of outcastness should that threat fail ...'.[6] (That last phrase is vital, for it carries Freud's/Lacan's notion that without castration, no integration.)

I've cited Cavell for a reason. I want now to defend my essay on Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) that was printed in the last 'MacGuffin' - an essay which has drawn an 'uncanny' or perhaps just a 'stunned' silence - and how better to start than by showing that what I wrote 'overlaps' a new book by the esteemed Professor Cavell? (For my own estimation of Cavell, see elsewhere in this issue.) So recall, first, how I wrote of Jeff (James Stewart) in that film that his climactic confrontation with Thorwald (Raymond Burr) has itself an air of the 'uncanny' about it. Thorwald is clearly the 'castrating' father-figure. Hence I wrote: 'When Thorwald finally comes to Jeff's apartment, he indeed poses a threat to the *eyes* of the hero. As if fighting fire with fire, Jeff at that moment must shield his own eyes while trying to ward off his assailant by firing photographic flashbulbs at him.' Such a moment seems directly comparable to the one in *Letter From An Unknown Woman* as described by Cavell.

For consider. Two problems that have beset the wheelchair-confined Jeff throughout *Rear Window* are his enforced passiveness, equatable with 'femininity', and his ambiguous, endistanced relations with his neighbours - who appear to him (and to us) as essentially just interesting puppets or automata. That is, until the film's two main climaxes. The first of these involves the death of a little dog (and remember that Hitchcock loved dogs), at which time the audience, but not Jeff, get to meet some of the neighbours in individual close-ups, pointedly *not* shot from Jeff's point-of-view. On the other hand, the second main climax involves precisely Jeff and his hands-on encounter with the neighbours' 'representative', Thorwald, who is also the film's 'bad' father-figure. (The film's 'good' father-figure, seen briefly onscreen, is Hitchcock.) Following Cavell, we may infer that after this encounter Jeff has successfully passed his 'castration' test, resulting for him in a second broken leg,[7] and has become an 'integrated' member of his community, one of the neighbours in fact. No longer will he (and it's to be hoped, members of the audience) find his fellow-creatures merely insubstantial and puppet-like. I'm reminded of the end of Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), at which time James Stewart says outright, 'This world and the people in it have [hitherto] always been dark and incomprehensible to me ...'.

Most of the above was at least implicit in what I wrote last time. My article also made use of E. Jentsch's understanding of what constitutes the 'uncanny', i.e., a matter of whether a person in a story is indeed 'a human being or an

automaton', and I criticised Freud for not giving that understanding more weight. Cavell, too, takes Freud to task for this.[8] But now note. What I also did last time was focus on a second aspect of male 'femininity' that operates in *Rear Window*, one concerning Hitchcock himself. I commented and gave reasons for how Hitchcock by the mid-1950s 'was now more laid back and his work showed a new openness to the "archetypal" which is so often a hallmark of creativity. The male mother emerged in him.'

That perspective puts us above the Oedipal drama in a place where the view is altogether broader, I think. My notion of Hitchcock's 'femininity' may well have come in part from earlier remarks of Cavell and William Rothman and then Leland Poague - see a note by me accompanying Professor Poague's article in this 'MacGuffin'. Now, to speak of Hitchcock's 'femininity' in this way isn't necessarily to say that he himself ever failed to resolve his Oedipal drama! It may only show in him a further and privileged stage of psychic development, a 'return of the displaced', if you will. On the other hand, what I wrote last time, that '"wholeness" isn't everything', still applies. Though I made the remark in a non-Freudian context, it could clearly mean that passing the Oedipal test isn't everything either. Especially for someone who has rightly been called a genius. I often remember a remark once made by one of the editors of 'Movie' (UK). How boring a lot of 'mature' films are, he said. I believe that he meant 'mature' in the sense of 'conformist'. Well, my article last time was concerned to show in Hitchcock a maturity of a different, less conventional kind. I'm speaking of someone who was now sufficiently 'detached', in various senses of that word, to be able to create in high spirits and with an eye for the sharpest and truest details. A paradox is how much this process involves a 'deep connectivity' or what the vitalist philosopher Henri Bergson called 'intuition'.[9]

I've just been corresponding by email with an American academic who is writing a book on Bergson's predecessor, Arthur Schopenhauer. Our discussion touched on how Schopenhauer himself put a primary emphasis on intuition and *then* on how the operation of 'reason' might come into play to create art, poetry, drama, music, philosophy, etc. Interestingly, it was this particular type of 'reason' that Schopenhauer regarded as 'feminine':

> *he maintained that reason was like a woman - it could only give after receiving, by which he meant that reason was only operational after receiving intuitive knowledge.*

I don't see anything incompatible here with the view of Hitchcock I expressed last time (albeit that it's *Lisa* in *Rear Window* who is explicitly credited with having 'intuition'). On the contrary, I think it works well as a paradigm or trope of what actually happens in *Rear Window*. Moreover, it seems to me that Schopenhauer's basic philosophy (virtually contemporaneous with the stories of Hoffmann) is precisely about how we're all indeed *both* human beings *and* automata. We're all human beings, nominally at any rate, in the world we live in each day, the world of what Schopenhauer called 'Representation' (made up of mental images).[10] On the other hand, there's a sense in which *none* of us is anything other than an automaton or a puppet viewed from the perspective of ultimate reality, what Schopenhauer called the world's 'Will' (or life-force).[11] Of course, the trick is to understand how these two aspects of the world are really one and conjoined. As Oliver Sacks puts it in 'Awakenings': 'To speak in terms of either [aspect] alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of constructing a meaningful world ...'.[12]

Bergson would surely have agreed with that. It also happens to be very close to Hitchcock's world-view, I think.

* * *

I honestly don't know how some of what I've just written may relate to the Oedipal drama; but then, some very wise people I've known have never read Freud, if you follow me. By the same token, there does seem a connection with what Cavell took from (or read into) the face-covering gesture of Louis Jourdan in *Letter From An Unknown Woman*, that it shows a man torn 'between avoiding the horror of knowing the existence of others and avoiding the horror of not knowing it ...'. As Schopenhauer understood, the world *is* a place of horror (something often mirrored in the fiction of his admirer, Joseph Conrad). The man - or everyman - in the Ophuls film may be seen as lacking the 'deep connectivity' that would have brought him into meaningful relations with the world. Accordingly, what Cavell calls 'the melodrama of the unknown woman' plays as a parable or trope of that sad truth - though you hardly need Cavell to explain it. Schopenhauer would do!

But let me be more precise for a moment about the two aspects of Schopenhauer's world-view and how it may indeed be Hitchcock's, too. In George Toles's essay on *Rear Window* that I quoted last time, he invokes Plato's famous parable of the cave (which Schopenhauer knew well). He suggests that many people live their lives in a sort of metaphorical darkness - 'and the only energy they ever have comes from egoism and dreams'.[13] Such people, Toles believes, are seen behind each of the rear windows in Hitchcock's film, to which observation I would add that the benightedness of these

people is shared by most of us most of the time: we feel ourselves free but are simply unaware of the massiveness of the drives and pressures, constituting Will, that compel us to think and act the way we do.

Now, Schopenhauer saw art and philosophy as affording us at least occasional respite from these pressures and as allowing us at least brief glimpses of our true condition - even finally a sense of the noumenal (Will) behind the phenomenal (Representation). But he understood that virtually no-one, not even a person of genius, could live in a state of enlightenment or Nirvana for more than a small portion of the time. Mind you, some people might try to do so: I sense that the Decadent aesthete Walter Pater, advocate of 'art for art's sake' and a major influence on Oscar Wilde (more on him in a moment), was such a person. In effect, Pater's excessive passiveness, commented on by Camille Paglia in her great book, 'Sexual Personae',[14] is a parody of true Nirvana.

Thus, in the benighted, and the 'Decadently' passive, respectively, are represented two opposed conditions that may result when 'a destructive duality' isn't mediated by the sort of knowledge Schopenhauer held out - and which I've suggested is embodied in Hitchcock's world-view. In my essay last time, I pointed to how Hitchcock in and beyond his film provides an 'Orphic' presence who acts as a re-uniter and healer, performing very much the active role of the artist that Schopenhauer advocated.

In this issue of 'The MacGuffin', Jason Rasmussen draws our attention to the detectable influence of Oscar Wilde on Hitchcock. Jason focusses on Wilde's novel 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1891) as the specific work of Wilde's that Hitchcock had read 'several times'. Well, it seems to me that 'Dorian Gray' provides an instance of a work by someone who was indeed conscious of how this world is both a place of Will (with all its horrors) and of Representation (appearance), and who succeeded brilliantly in embodying his duplex knowledge in a novel that is both visionary and dynamic, a novel of 'deep connectivity'.[15]

Here in passing is a personal anecdote. Many years ago, while I was still a student at university, I first read a passage in 'Dorian Gray' that has always seemed to me to embody the spirit of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). Lord Henry says:

> *It is an odd thing, but everyone who disappears is said to be seen at San Francisco. It must be a delightful city, and possess all the attractions of the next world.* (Chapter Nineteen)

On reading that, I wrote to Hitchcock and told him of my 'feeling'. A few weeks later there arrived in my letterbox a package addressed to me and marked 'Alfred J. Hitchcock Productions, Universal City, Los Angeles'. Inside was a copy of Truffaut's 'Hitchcock' (which had recently come out). Just that and nothing else.

* * *

Now a few thoughts further defending my article last time on *Rear Window*. I've adapted them from some email correspondence I had recently with Professor B. He apologised for having read my piece only 'very quickly', and so I started by saying how glad I was that he had been *able* to read the piece quickly! Touching on something we'd discussed before, I wrote:

> *There was much elbow-grease and spittle applied to polishing the piece into a 'readable' state, in [trying to remove] all vestiges of the academic tendency to passive voice, abstract nouns, and convoluted constructions, instead of active verbs, concrete, verifiable illustrations, and short, immediately-graspable sentences.*

On another, related matter we'd previously discussed, I added:

> *Behind that lies my yogic, Schopenhauerian understanding: that percepts are closer than [mere] concepts to the only immediate and knowable 'reality' available to us; that over-use of conceptual thinking, without checking against perceived reality, is inviting of non-sense (for as Schopenhauer pointed out: it is possible to go on and on using concepts and never come down to earth, more's the pity!).*

My own main criticism of my article is that, despite my best efforts, it was too dense. In a way, I blame Hitchcock for that! Only in the course of writing about *Rear Window* did I begin to fully grasp what an intricate mechanism Hitchcock and scriptwriter John Michael Hayes had created. Hitchcock's cameo-appearance in the film as a man winding a clock is deceptively modest. He should have portrayed himself as a Swiss-watch-maker!

Despite that, I still feel that my article did some good things:

1. Apart from what I'd call the 'gee whiz' content (comparisons of the film to Delibes's 'Coppelia', etc.), there are several sharp observations nestling in there - not unrelated naturally to Hitchcock's own sharp eye mentioned already. For example, I pointed out how *nobody* in the film seems to want to get too 'involved', as when Lisa (Grace Kelly) is heard to say about the Thorwalds, 'I don't care'. I would ask: is the fact of the matter adumbrated here greatly different from what Schopenhauer tells us, that we're all bound in subjectivity - and that sometimes we wilfully help the process along? Certainly Norman Bates in *Psycho*, made six years after *Rear Window*, has a point about the benighted human condition when *he* is heard to say, 'We're all in our private traps!'

2. I'm reasonably happy with the *structure* of my article. True, I allowed myself to make what is perhaps the key point in an almost throwaway passage about Aldous Huxley's 'The Gioconda Smile'; nonetheless I did establish to my own satisfaction that Hitchcock was familiar with both that particular story and its analogues (one of which was the Francis Iles novel 'Malice Aforethought', which Hitchcock had wanted to film and finally directed on American *radio* in 1946). Huxley's tale had been greatly talked about when it was first published in the 1920s, not least because the sensational murder case it was based on was still fresh in people's minds. I think that there's every reason to believe that it provided Hitchcock, at some deep level, with the inspiration for the (Mona) Lisa character in *Rear Window*, and very probably prepared him to make an even more elaborate use of feminine archetypes in *Vertigo*. (These are discussed in 'MacGuffin' 11.)

3. I think that my estimation of Hitchcock as someone of both 'negative capability' (empathy) and 'imperious mastery' (given to control) takes a *lot* of his measure!

4. Finally, I'd say that a major point of my article - and of much of my particular take these days on movies - is that you can stand further and further back from the art of someone like Hitchcock and see new levels of association. Ditto, for life itself! To me, that's something that film criticism is very good for. So thank you Stella in *Rear Window*, for reminding us that we *should* get outside our houses - and our customary ways of seeing - every once in a while, in order to look back in.

* * *

This issue of 'The MacGuffin' is something of a readers' issue. I thank each of our contributors wholeheartedly.

Leland Poague teaches at Iowa State University and is editor with Marshall Deutelbaum of 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986). Professor Poague and I currently find ourselves in amicable contention with each other, and regular 'MacGuffin' readers will recall how this came about. Back in 'MacGuffin' 17, I wrote an article on *Vertigo* that was critical of Poague's own, long article on that film that had appeared in the 1994 'Hitchcock Annual'. Now Poague has responded to what I wrote, linking his response to an analysis by him of noted Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar's *High Heels* (1991) - a film that makes its own 'intertextual' references to *Vertigo*.

My latest comments about Poague's position are included in this issue. I've made them as frank, and as specific, as I can - and I've invited Professor Poague to write back if he should want to. Readers' comments will also be very welcome.

Stephen Donatelli teaches literature at Harvard University, and the title of his thoughtful and somewhat whimsical short essay on *North by Northwest* (1959) included below - "Hitchcock's Intense Inanity" - is taken from Shelley. (I can't resist observing that Shelley was another contemporary of Schopenhauer, and that the description in 'Prometheus Unbound' of the cosmos as 'the intense inane' reminds me strongly of Schopenhauer's own view of things!) Recently Mr Donatelli co-wrote with Robert Castle, who edits the excellent newsletter called 'Film Ex', an article on Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* that has been accepted by Film Comment'.

I've already had cause to mention Jason Rasmussen's article, "Hitchcock, Sexuality, and the Self", which is basically about Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' and Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951). Jason has carefully researched his topic, and writes most knowledgeably. He's currently employed by the University of Wisconsin Medical School though hoping soon to do graduate work in the field of English literature.

Lisle Foote is a recent graduate of the University of East Anglia Film Archive MA Program. Her thesis involved tracing the changing attitude of the American press to Hitchcock and his films, 1926-1939, i.e., up until when Hitchcock went to the US to live and work. Lisle's careful findings are reported in this 'MacGuffin' by means of two items: a special 'News' feature, summarising her work on Hitchcock, and a separate short article adapted from her thesis and called

"Hitchcock's early personality profiles in the US press". Lisle herself is now living in the US, doing clerical work at UCLA while looking for a job in a film library. She's married to David Mullen, who's a cinematographer.

Our 'Book Review' in this issue is in fact the promised review by Charles Silet of "The *Rebecca* Project" on CD-ROM. Charles Silet teaches at Iowa State University and is reviews editor for the 'Hitchcock Annual'.

Our 'Oz-report' is again contributed by Freda Freiberg, who lives in Melbourne, Australia. Freda is co-author with Annette Blonski and Barbara Creed of the important book, 'Don't Shoot Darling!: Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia' (1987).

***

I trust our readers will enjoy this rather special issue of 'The MacGuffin'.

To everyone, good viewing - Ken Mogg.

Notes

1. S. Cavell, 'Contesting Tears' (1996), p. 111.
2. Not to continue in rhetorical vein: Cavell in fact cites Freud in order to equate 'femininity' with 'passiveness' (Cavell, p. 112).
3. Cavell, p. 110.
4. Ibid, p. 81.
5. Ibid, p. 110.
6. Ibid, pp. 110-11.
7. The question arises: what might Jeff's *first* broken leg symbolise? I'm happy to equate it with humankind's natural state of mortality and 'impotence' into which each of us is born. (Compare Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death', Chapter III, as quoted in 'MacGuffin' 23, p. 20.) Hence Jeff's motor-racetrack accident forcibly reminds him of his basic 'weakness'. It wouldn't be the only time in a Hitchcock film when someone has had to be so reminded in order to embark on a new, more purposeful direction in life.
8. Cavell, p. 110.
9. In Bergson's 'Creative Evolution' (1907), he brilliantly associated the thought process with the form of that new phenomenon, the movie. This is definitely worth remembering, considering that Bergson's status as something of a cult-figure reached its apogee in the 1920s, when the young director Hitchcock was mixing in some avante-garde film circles. Another parallel to 'deep connectivity' is one I mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 21, p. 13. There, I noted how Paul Klee, who would become Hitchcock's favourite painter, in the 1920s proclaimed that the artist who penetrates to 'that secret place where primeval power nurtures all evolution' succeeds in embracing 'the life force itself', thereby arriving at 'that Romanticism which is one with the universe'. A similar thought informed André Breton's notion of surrealism.
10. I thank Harry Ausmus for suggesting to me that Schopenhauer's use of the German word 'Vorstellung' is probably best rendered as 'mental images' (rather than as 'idea' or 'representation').
11. The religious notion of individual 'souls' merely offers a parallel case to what I'm describing here, and for that reason may be omitted from the present discussion of 'human being' versus 'puppet'. Philosophically, the notion of 'soul' carries little weight; and in any case Descartes's literally dogmatic exclusion of animals from soul-status (while allowing it to all human beings) shows that, in this area, he was certainly *no* philosopher.
12. O. Sacks, 'Awakenings' (revised edition 1982), p. 219.
13. G.E. Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* as Critical Allegory", 'boundary 2', 16, No. 2-3, Winter-Spring 1990, p. 241. Toles is in fact here quoting Iris Murdoch on Plato, a passage in which she proposes that the movie theatre *literalises* Plato's cave. A connection with what was said by some of the thinkers quoted in footnote 9 above may not be wholly coincidental - and perhaps Hitchcock's films, with their 'deep connectivity', are showing us the reasons why.
14. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence From Nefertiti To Emily Dickinson' (1991), p. 481.
15. It would not surprise me to learn that Wilde had been an influence at some level on Max Ophuls.

Coming attractions

Hitchcock's *Suspicion* - and its ending; Hitchcock's *Murder!*; Dan Auiler's "My Favourite Hitchcock Films". Plus 'Letters', 'News', book reviews, etc. Extra items always wanted.

LETTER

Nandor Bokor, University of Technology, Budapest, Hungary

I think your term 'motherly dimension' referring to *Rear Window* ['MacGuffin' 23] is quite wonderful. I remember when I was about 15 and I saw eight or nine Hitchcock films on Hungarian TV, that one of the qualities I felt most distinctly about them was that there was someone there bestowing wisdom and loving care on his audiences. I guess I felt the same quality that your article talks about.

Also, your description of Hitch's cameos as 'a palpable reminder to us that he's in control' (p. 21) seems very accurate to me, and reinforces what I had felt as a child while watching his films.

NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Death of Peggy Robertson

Alfred Hitchcock's long-time script supervisor/assistant, Peggy Robertson, died on February 6th, aged 81. Peggy Robertson first worked with Hitchcock on *Under Capricorn* (1949), made in England, before re-joining him later in America on *Vertigo* (1958), remaining in his personal employ until he decided to close his office in 1979. Hitchcock died the following year.

The Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills contains a long interview with Peggy Robertson as part of its Oral History Program.

Now about *Psycho* ...

Two fascinating pieces of information about *Psycho* (1960) came to light on the <alt.movies.hitchcock> Usenet site a few months ago. One concerned how when 'Mrs Bates', brandishing a knife, heads towards Lila Crane in the fruit-cellar, just before Sam rushes in, the words 'I am Norma Bates' are clearly heard. This particular effect is taken straight from Robert Bloch's original novel (Chapter Fifteen). The line in the film isn't disguised, just strung out (interestingly, you don't see Mrs Bates's lips move), and it's given a fairly base-y rendering in contrast to the high pitch of the shrieking violins. So you don't consciously notice it, yet it lends its weird, unnatural effect all the same.

The other piece of information is that some prints of the film have an additional 'subliminal' shot of the grinning skull. All prints have a fleeting shot of the skull at the end, as we leave Norman in his cell and dissolve to the car exiting the swamp. But some prints have a similar effect much earlier, where Norman is down at the swamp, near the gnarled tree, and turns his head when he hears Sam calling his name. (One surmises that Hitchcock experimented with introducing the effect at this point as a possible way of preparing us to see 'Mrs Bates' in the fruit-cellar later on.) Stephen Rebello, author of 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of *Psycho*' (1990), is kicking himself for not remembering the effect when he wrote his book. He sent us this email: 'It is indeed there, and the strangest thing happened the other night. Whilst reading a Buchan thriller, I distinctly recalled seeing at a theater in Harvard Square, Boston, a re-release of *Psycho* in which [the] skull did in fact appear in the earlier scene. I remembered tossing it off at the time as due to my cramming too hard for finals.'

Hitchcock's reputation with the US press, 1926-39

'A sappy chorus girl picture, probably intended for the sappy sticks ...'. On that inauspicious note, 'Sime' in 'Daily Variety' began his review of Hitchcock's *The Pleasure Garden*; it was the first review of a Hitchcock film to appear in an American publication. Thoroughly negative, it didn't even mention the film's director. But that was in 1926. Nine years later things had changed. According to a 'Time' reviewer, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* provided 'one of the neatest melodramas of the year', and 'Alfred Hitchcock's direction' was the equal of a story 'told in sharp, abbreviated sequences gathering pace steadily toward their explosive climax'.

A turning-point in getting Hitchcock's name - and his films - known to American audiences was the release of *Blackmail* in 1929. His first sound film had received rapturous praise in several English newspapers, and this was something that even 'Life' magazine felt worthy of an article though the writer, Harry Evans, warned his readers that 'this picture does not merit all the fuss'. *Blackmail* had a two-week engagement at the Selwyn theatre in New York (as well as opening in Los Angeles and elsewhere), with a top ticket price of $2 - far more upscale than the one-day engagement, 45-cent seats *The Pleasure Garden* had commanded at Loew's New York.

Facts such as these come from a recent master's thesis successfully submitted to the University of East Anglia's Film Archive program by Lisle Foote. According to Lisle, what initially hampered a British director from building a reputation in America was the low regard in which the British cinema was held there, both by reviewers and audiences. The same issue of 'Daily Variety' (3 November 1926) that called *The Pleasure Garden* 'sappy' had this to say about Graham Cutts's *The Prude's Fall* (re-titled *Dangerous Virtue* in the US), on which Hitchcock had been editor and titles-artist:

> *One of the striking examples of why British films are not acceptable to American audiences. Just a piece of junk and far from worthy, even as a place on a double-feature bill at Loew's New York. ... The New York audience hooted it from the screen in derision. ... This is one to lay off unless you want to show your audience how badly pictures can be made in England.*

Until the US release of *Blackmail*, the only other Hitchcock picture to be exhibited in that country was *The Lodger* (strangely re-titled *The Case of Jonathan Drew*). Lisle Foote says that American critical reaction to Hitchcock's films fell into two periods. Up until *Waltzes From Vienna* (re-titled *Strauss' Great Waltz*), made in 1933 but not released in America until 1935, they 'received the same attention given to [films] of any other British director'. That is, American trade papers gave them short, factual reviews, and newspapers occasionally covered them - sometimes in a review based on a film's London opening. Then, with the release of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in 1935, Hitchcock was hailed by the critics as Britain's greatest director.

Apart from the sheer entertainment value of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Lisle Foote suggests that there were other possible reasons for that film's success. First, Hitchcock had lately moved to a new studio, Gaumont-British, who were actively pursuing the American market and who were able to give the film a much wider release than the director's earlier films. Further, it's likely that the US success of the Charles Laughton picture, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Alexander Korda, 1933), helped pave the way for other British films. And again, the casting in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* of Peter Lorre, in his first international role since the child-murderer in *M* (Fritz Lang, 1930), let the critics write about a known actor. They would seize a similar opportunity a year or so later when Hitchcock's *Secret Agent* also included Lorre in the cast.

In fact, US reviewers were always very actor-conscious. When Charles Laughton finally made a Hitchcock picture, *Jamaica Inn* (1939), the film itself was hardly a success. Fortunately for Hitchcock's reputation on the eve of his departure for Hollywood, several of the reviewers blamed Laughton! The 'Time' reviewer said that the picture was not an authentic Hitchcock 'but an authentic Charles Laughton. Scarcely a shot in the whole picture revealed the famed British director's old mastery of cunning camera, sly humour, shrewd suspense.' Nonetheless, as that quote shows, the reviewers now knew (or thought they knew) what a Hitchcock picture should be. The 'Hollywood Reporter' said that in *Jamaica Inn* 'Hitchcock pleases the audience with his usual wealth of good little directorial touches'. John Mosher's review in the 'New Yorker' astutely singled out for praise a particular touch: the dinner party such 'as only Hitchcock, with his Hogarthian soul, could compose'.

• Not the least of the factors behind reviewers' informed reports on Hitchcock and his films was the existence by now of the Hitchcock legend itself. Carefully supervised by Hitchcock, it had some factual basis. Quite often, Hitchcock would give interviews and his studio would issue promotional material. Elsewhere in this issue, we print Lisle Foote's description of Hitchcock's 'personality profiles' which the US press in its turn wrote up and helped to valorise.

Hitchcock's Intense Inanity

Article by Stephen Donatelli

WHEREVER TWO OR MORE people are gathered in Hitchcock's name, the device of the 'MacGuffin' is likely to come up. That's the peculiar personage, object or event upon which the whole story depends, even though neither the characters nor ourselves have the faintest idea about who or what he, she or it really is. Hitchcock himself pointed to the

tarmac scene in *North by Northwest* as being in the spirit of this curious device. It's there that Leo G. Carroll finally gets around to telling Cary Grant why the government invented a nonexistent agent and what it had hoped to gain by doing so. But the words he speaks are swallowed up by the din of nearby airplane engines. Ever the child of silent films, Hitchcock had come to discover that the 'facts' are sometimes cinematically moot. The probability that the facts might mean something or other, or nothing, or be forever elusive,[1] is good enough for him and his art.

You can take the charm of this discovery a step further, though, by wondering if the device of the 'empty fact' has a pertinence beyond its utility as a film-making technique. I mean, what if the MacGuffin were as much a vision of life as it is a great director's technical signature? What if, at the bottom of all our hitherings and thitherings, as Hitchcock seems to suggest, there really was only something rather stupid or not even worth knowing - a kind of cruel gibberish? *North by Northwest* sets that question before us again and again, but in small ways that easily escape notice as we tend to fixate on the more flamboyant images of the stiletto murder at the U.N. or the cropduster conflagration. It's worth inspecting a few of those smaller souvenirs, keeping in mind that *all* filmic 'effects', special or otherwise, will always exact a secret price from us. They do mean something, whether we or their practitioners want them to or not. Even meaninglessness can mean something, and once you begin hunting around in *North by Northwest*, the case builds against the MacGuffin as a totally innocent technical trick.

To bring this monumental hypothesis down to size, I sometimes like to think about the little statue which shatters on Mount Rushmore, as Eva Marie Saint and Cary Grant flee across the stony, carved faces. The broken figurine exposes a snippet of microfilm - state secrets, presumably; what they are is quite beside the point. (Future exegetes may find that that snippet of film is nothing but an outtake from the masterwork, *North by Northwest*, a film which, like its micro-cousin, isn't supposed to have a discernible meaning.) Throughout the course of this northwestward-ho epic, images like the statuette regularly appear. They don't contain anything legible, or else their content, once read, doesn't mean anything or is just blank.

This big zero at the centre of Hitchcock gets written up large on Roger Thornhill's monogrammed matchbook, a crucial prop in the film and a fitting emblem for Roger's superficial lifestyle. The 'O' in 'ROT' means, as Roger tells the inquiring Eve, 'nothing'. For an Englishman like Hitchcock, of course, 'rot' really is a kind of nothing, a something not worth bothering about, folderol, rubbish, nonsense. Roger's name, and by implication his existence, rotates upon an axis of (to paraphrase Shelley) intense inanity. Like a doughnut or a hollow cylinder, Hitchcock's centre of gravity is always located at a point in empty space.

The hint of something null at the core of things comes back to us in the little things, the properties. The late-appearing pistol, for example, is fired a total of three times in three separate scenes, each of those times with great dramatic impact. As Martin Landau's lizard-like character discovers, the pistol is loaded with blanks. So much fuss and bother over nothing! (Of course, when Martin gets plugged in the monument scne, the professor admonishes the rifle-wielding park policeman, 'Not fair, using real bullets'; in Hitchcock's artificial universe, life is not supposed to be worth losing or [by inference] living. You mustn't worry your head about it!)

As with the real bullet that wasted Martin, *North by Northwest*, despite its stubborn belief in the void at the heart of us all, occasionally can't help grazing somebody's flesh. People have this odd proclivity, you see, for getting in the way of Hitchcock's railroading, and while he may agree to show them at such inconvenient moments, he faces them only fleetingly, or even not at all. When confronted with Eve's betrayal, for example, James Mason registers an exceptional grimace which bespeaks his pain at finding out that what he had taken to be true and trustworthy is only an elaborate lie. Mason as Vandamm quickly recovers, though, and hatches a fine, impromptu plan for shoving Eve out the door of his private plane.

When it comes to seeing how costly it really is to discover that experience is a sham, Eva Marie Saint's performance is much more eloquent than that given by Mason's momentarily discommoded villain. In an incomparable cinematic passage, towards the end of the film, the character Eve discovers Thornhill's monogrammed matchbook in the ashtray at Vandamm's house. The camera sees her only from above and from behind. Her spontaneous recognition of the Thornhill monogramme gives her a slight but deeply expressive start. Eve's face is not visible. One may hazard that it doesn't need to be, since the principle of the MacGuffin dictates that it is not all that necessary for us to know a human face in the way that a director like Bergman has taught us to know one, namely, as the direct expression of a deeper self. The advent of individual identity is a little too slightly unbearable for Hitchcock, and not very well integrated into his agenda. Eva Marie Saint's expressiveness fills the screen in spite of the director's rigorous censure. It is a triumph of acting over the nominal limits set by the director.[2]

It's also important that, as a person whose inner life Hitchcock can't look at, that person should be a woman: her body is the human currency with which the film balances its political and erotic debts. In consenting to smoke out the spies, she has made a principled decision and has put her entire rational and physical self on the line in a way that far exceeds the puny and expedient investments made by every other character (all men). If Hitchcock had really wanted to give us a good look at the human meaning behind the revelation of deceit, if he had pursued the message encoded within his favourite filmic principle, *North by Northwest* would be about Eve, not about the aging and blustering beefcake, Roger. Moral depth, I suspect, is not to Hitchcock's taste, and we can only wonder what the monumental gains and losses would be if it were.

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Notes

1. Editor's footnote. For a recent 'deconstructive reading' of *North by Northwest*, arguing that the signifying presences its characters take for granted are all illusion, see Christopher D. Morris, "The Direction of *North by Northwest*", 'Cinema Journal' 36, No. 4, Summer 1997, pp. 43-56.
2. Editor's footnote. A similar point about the contribution made by Hitchcock's actors, beyond the limits of his control, is stated at the outset of a recent fine article by Deborah Thomas, "On Being Norman: Performance and Inner Life in Hitchcock's *Psycho*", in 'CineAction', No. 4, 1997, pp. 66-72. But it seems to me that Thomas's article effectively qualifies the point thus stated ...

OZ-REPORT
Hearts a-flutter in colonial New South Wales

THE BIG EVENT THIS summer in Australia was the opening of *Oscar and Lucinda*. For the Australian film industry, 1997 had been a year of modest, competent entertainments that re-cycled narratives from popular Hollywood genres - the road movie, the thriller, the musical, the dork family satire - but re-situated them in an Australian setting and peppered them with some laconic Australian humour. *Oscar and Lucinda* was lumbered with much greater expectations. To begin with, it had the backing of a big Hollywood studio, enjoyed a big budget, starred a big overseas star (Ralph Fiennes), and was directed by Gillian Armstrong, she of the Brilliant Career. Furthermore, it was an adaptation of a big novel by Peter Carey, an ambitious and sprawling epic, which won the 1988 Booker Prize in the year of the bicentenary of British colonization of Australia.

It was perhaps inevitable that the great expectations of this movie were not to be realized, for the novel is not suited to Hollywoodization. The film is largely faithful to the events of the novel, reproducing the episodic and fragmented narrative in the way it sketches the separate and briefly touching careers of British Oscar and Australian Lucinda and retaining the off-screen narrator, Oscar's great-grandson (whose voice is supplied by Geoffrey Rush, best known for his starring role in *Shine*) for continuity and comment. But the novel's project was an ambitious one; it was no less than a post-colonial re-writing of both the Victorian novel and Australian history in the light of late 20th-century attitudes. Carey renders absurd the grand narratives of the nineteenth century - the grand narratives of novelistic fiction, of progress, of imperial expansion, of heroism, of industrial capitalism, of missionary Christianity. But the Hollywood epic relies on the grand sweep of traditional narrative, and carries with it the expectations of the *Bildungsroman*: audiences expect fully fleshed out heroes and heroines who experience grand passions, who love and triumph or love and lose, but at least they learn from their experiences, they mature, acquire depth and understanding in the process.

Armstrong, superbly served by her photographers and costume and set designers, has re-created place and period in magnificent lush detail; she has also humanized and softened Carey's absurdly malfunctioning central characters - gaining an engagingly warm and gentle performance from Fiennes, whose previous performances have been notably wooden. The cinematography is truly epic - the landscape of rural Devon and outback New South Wales is rendered in great romantic vistas reminiscent of the epic landscapes of David Lean. The grand passion of the two lonely misfits, Oscar and Lucinda, is communicated credibly and tangibly in their shared passion for gambling, the scenes of which are alive with quasi-sexual excitement.

But the film misses out on the novel's acerbic social critique. In trying to be a movie epic, and yet remain faithful to the novel, the film must fail to achieve either aim, for the novel is an epic anti-epic. The magnificent cinematoography, period recreation and star performances produce in the movie audience the desire for a passionate romance but the story (even with a crucial change to the ending, that allows Lucinda to retain her fortune and raise Oscar's son) frustrates their desire for all-out epic romance. Admirers of the novel, on the other hand, have bemoaned the film's recourse to the

picturesque, its realism and humanism, finding there a betrayal of Carey's supple, sophisticated, contemporary intelligence.

Nevertheless, in almost all respects, especially in the quality of its performances and in its mise-en-scène, *Oscar and Lucinda* is a better film than *The English Patient*, which was a popular and critical success. Perhaps great expectations too readily engender large disappointments.

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Hitchcock's early personality profiles in the US press

Article by Lisle Foote

REVIEWS OF HIS FILMS were not the only coverage Hitchcock received in the American popular press. He was also the subject of personality profiles in general interest magazines. Articles about English directors were not common in such magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. But Hitchcock's mixture of box-office success and interesting eccentricities seem to have made him a worthy subject with editors.

What's most remarkable about these Hitchcock articles is their consistency, both between each other and with interviews that appeared throughout the director's career. Hitchcock biographer Donald Spoto wrote: 'By 1979 he had perfected a small supply of familiar anecdotes that satisfied the press - one or two about the painstaking methods he applied to preparing a film, one or two about the practical jokes he liked to play in the early days.'[1] However, in one respect Spoto was wrong: Hitchcock had worked out these anecdotes forty years earlier. Right from the start, every article included a standard Hitchcock biography, a summary of his working methods, and samples of what 'Life' called his 'innumerable peculiarities'[2] (including his alleged penchant for cruelty and practical jokes), as well as his interest in food, his resulting weight problem, and his diet attempts.

The biographical sections of the articles invariably mentioned Hitchcock's father's greengrocery business (the 'New Yorker' helpfully translated the family's little more than working-class status to 'solid middle class' - the equivalent of shop owners in the States)[3] and young Alfred's Jesuit schooling (though no mention yet of how the Jesuits taught him suspense). Then would follow mention of Hitchcock's night-course work, his stints in the cable business and advertising, his move to the titles department at Paramount, London, and his eventual graduation to directing. The articles did not fail to point out how the variety of tasks he performed at the studio mirrored his complete command later on of all aspects of his craft. His wife rated a few sentences noting her continued work on his films. 'Life' even published a picture of the whole family, dogs included (Alma and Patricia in Hollywood native costume, Hitchcock still in a dark suit).[4] The articles ignored his early British films: 'Life' called *Sabotage/The Woman Alone* (1936) 'an early Hitchcock thriller'.[5] In a long anecdote about Hitchcock's trials in making *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), the film's name was never mentioned. Nevertheless, the anecdote is quite similar to the version Hitchcock gave Truffaut, with film-stock confiscated at the border, money running out, and a profligate actress.

Although the word hadn't been introduced yet, American journalists accepted Hitchcock's claims to be an auteur. Russell Maloney wrote in the 'New Yorker': 'A Hitchcock picture is, for better or worse, about 99.44% Hitchcock. [He] selects all his stories and is the leading figure in the adaptation, [the] writing of the dialogue, and [the] preparation of the shooting script'.[6] The same article then mentions Hitchcock's shot-by-shot planning and the uneventful actual filming. Other articles included similar Hitchcock profiles, all crediting him with complete control. Reinforcing this aspect of the legend, 'Living Age' (a sort of highbrow 'Reader's Digest') reprinted an article Hitchcock himself had written for 'The Listener', London, with his thoughts on editing, the producer's role, film costs, and actors.[7] None of the articles quesioned Hitchcock's version of his input, or interviewed his collaborators for confirmation (of course, these stories were not intended as investigative journalism). Such work did not appear for several decades, in books like Spoto's 'The Dark Side of Genius' (1983) and television shows like the BBC's 'Omnibus' program called "Hitchcock, a two-part documentary profile" (1986). However, it's interesting to notice how much detail about the filmmaking process writers and editors of the time thought that the general public wanted to read. Then again, Hitchcock's working methods were often presented as yet another of his eccentricities.

Geoffrey Hellman in 'Life' informed his readers that Hitchcock 'cultivates his idiosyncrasies',[8] and all the magazines were happy to list these. Among Hitchcock's harmless peculiarities noted by the press were his love of travel ('Life' claimed that he made spy pictures because spies also like to travel, and such pictures enabled Hitchcock to do so on an expense account basis);[9] his ability to sleep through parties and the theatre (he 'has managed to sit through the best plays

of many a London season without seeing more than a fraction of them');[10] his inability to handle money (according to the 'New Yorker', his accountant paid him an allowance of £10 per week, forcing Hitchcock to circumvent it 'like an improvident young wife');[11] and his 'amiable practice of letting off steam by smashing all available teacups'[12] (this seems to be an instance of how a story may grow in the telling, as formerly it was only Hitchcock's own cup that got smashed at the end of each tea time!). All of this made for an entertaining profile, matching the stereotype of the eccentric Englishman. But the writers also relished describing Hitchcock's darker idiosyncrasies.

Even in the late 1930s, Hitchcock's love of practical jokes and his reputation for cruelty received even more attention than his 'cute' oddities. 'Life' listed some practical jokes he'd played that were still being discussed in the 'Omnibus' program: the laxative-laced drink he gave to a property man who'd been handcuffed in the studio overnight; birthday presents of 400 smoked herring or large items of furniture delivered to friends with small flats.[13] The beginnings of his reputation for being cruel to actors also appeared: the 'New Yorker' told of him shouting 'That's terrible! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?' to a 'dear old lady' actress.[14] The same writer quoted him on actors: 'Break 'em down right at the start. It's much the best way.'[15] The articles linked his cruel streak to the themes of his films (though not to the extent that Spoto did later): Hellman pointed to Mrs Danvers's sadistic side (in the forthcoming *Rebecca*), the dismembered blondes of *The Lodger* (1926), and the explosion that kills Stevie in *Sabotage/The Woman Alone* as 'precisely the sort of thing which brings roses to Mr Hitchcock's rather extensive cheeks and induces his most malevolently cherubic expression ... [he] is living proof that a man weighing more than 250 pounds need not be genial.'[16] The disparity between his appearance and his films was remarked on by all.

But the writers didn't simply mention his weight and eating habits: they went into detail. 'Newsweek' said that 'his prowess as a trencherman remains a matter of international admiration.'[17] The others described his love of steaks, ice-cream, and alcohol, as well as his astronomical restaurant bills ('Life' reported that he habitually spent $25 for dinner).[18] This invariably led to his precise current weight ('Newsweek' even added the bonus of Alma's weight)[19] and his efforts to reduce. However, the last article of this period, published in Novemeber, 1939, tried to play down the matter of his over-eating. Against all the evidence, 'Life' stated that Hitchcock's 'reputation [for being a gourmand] is really unjustified'.[20] This was the only aspect of the director's biographical legend that a writer questioned at this time - and that was very possibly because Hitchcock requested it! Hitchcock was allowed to construct his legend in the United States, just as he had in the United Kingdom. He gave the journalists what they needed to write entertaining pieces. As Robert Kapsis has observed: 'part of Hitchcock's genius ... was his ability through much of his career to maintain a good working relationship with the media.'[21]

©1998, by Lisle Foote

Notes

1. D. Spoto, 'The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (New York, 1983), p. 6.
2. "Alfred Hitchcock: England's Best Director Starts Work in Hollywood", 'Life', 29 November 1939, p. 67.
3. R. Maloney, "Profiles: What Happens After That", 'New Yorker', 10 September 1938, p. 25.
4. G.T. Hellman, "Alfred Hitchcock: England's Best and Biggest Director Goes to Hollywood", 'Life', 19 June 1939, p. 34.
5. Ibid, p. 33.
6. Maloney, pp. 25-26.
7. A. Hitchcock, "A Director's Problem", 'Living Age', April 1938, pp. 172-74.
8. Hellman, p. 36.
9. Ibid, p. 34.
10. Ibid, p. 43.
11. Maloney, p. 28.
12. "*The Lady Vanishes* and a British Trencherman is Again Spotlighted", 'Newsweek', 17 October 1938, p. 29.
13. Hellman, p. 34.
14. Editor's note. I think I've seen this reported as an elaborate gag of Hitchcock's, with the 'dear old lady' a hired actress well-paid for her trouble.
15. Maloney, p. 26.
16. Hellman, pp. 33-34.
17. 'Newsweek', p. 29.
18. Hellman, p. 33.
19. 'Newsweek', p. 29.
20. 'Life', 29 November 1939, p. 67.
21. R.E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (Chicago, 1992), p. 24

Background to what follows: excerpts from a controversy ...

In order for our readers to better appreciate Leland Poague's article "Engendering (More) *Vertigo*" printed below, we first include short excerpts from the two articles it refers to. We also include a detailed plot synopsis of the film *High Heels* ... First, here are passages from Poague's original piece that appeared in the 1994 "Hitchcock Annual'.

(a) From "Engendering *Vertigo*" by Leland Poague ...

'... Though [Tania] Modleski has lately accused [Stanley] Cavell of engaging "in conversations with himself," there have been precious few interlocutors for Cavell among the cadres of professional film scholars.

'There is good reason for scholars to avoid Cavell. His vision of the task of criticism is capacious and intricate; it rivals at every turn the standard "SLAB Theory" (SLAB = Saussure-Lacan-Althusser-Barthes) by means of which a whole generation of film professors has undertaken to characterize the ideological force of the cinematic apparatus. Though Cavell avows a specific loyalty to the transcendental romanticism of Emerson and Thoreau, it is his general claim that romanticism - as represented by such as Descartes and Kant and Rousseau and Nietzsche (in philosophy) and Shakespeare and Coleridge and Poe and Kleist (in literature) - fully anticipates the critique of culture undertaken more recently in the work of (in the names of) Marx and Freud, Lacan and Derrida. ...

'... Crucial for our purposes [here] are Cavell's "derivation" of "remarriage comedy" from its (mostly Shakespearean) sources in classical comedy and his subsequent derivation of "the melodrama of the unknown woman" from remarriage comedy, derivations which are describable (mythically) as a matter of conversation or interpretation or negation: "Let us think of the common inheritance of the members of a genre as a story, call it a myth. The members of a genre will be interpretations of it, or to use Thoreau's word for it, revisions of it, which will also make them interpretations of one another ('Pursuits of Hasppiness' 31). ...

'... My more immediate purpose, however, is to establish a context for describing *Vertigo*, like *Othello*, as "a failed comedy of remarriage" in which "the reunion is hideously parodied and becomes possible only a moment too late" (PH 142). ...

'My specification of *Vertigo*'s participation in the genre of remarriage comedy can (and must) be brief - precisely *because* the links are so systematic. I will return to the "Capra" intertext of *Vertigo* in discussing the latter film's relationship (via Stewart) to *It's a Wonderful Life*. Let me mark in passing two moments of *Vertigo*, however, which link it to *It Happened One Night*: 1) the scene in Scottie's apartment, after "Madeleine's" fall into San Francisco Bay (I take the impromptu clothesline with Madeleine's "things" slung over it, stockings included, as a direct allusion to the first "Wall of Jericho" scene of *It Happened*); and 2) Judy's declaration, as she and Scottie are preparing to dine at Ernie's, just before she puts on the necklace, that she is "hungry" (which takes up in short-hand form the equation of physical and spiritual appetites which Capra spreads so carefully through his version of the story). ...

'But there is another way to understand the film and Hitchcock's participation in it. Partly this involves his legendary cameo appearance. In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock is visible walking down a sidewalk outside Elster's shipyard, a large flashlight in his hand, just before Scottie enters the frame en route to Elster's office. Hitchcock thus marks *himself* as mortal, as seeking no exemption; we might say he is enlightened. Put another way, we are *all* "copies," *all* "counterfeits." Our existence does *not* depend upon complete independence or originality. ...'

(b) And here are excerpts from "Engendering the Truth about *Vertigo*: thoughts on an article by Leland Poague in the 1994 'Hitchcock Annual'" by Ken Mogg (the original article was printed in 'MacGuffin'17) ...

'I have read and re-read Professor Poague's 37-page article on *Vertigo*, and have come away dissatisfied! The article doesn't seem to me to be driven by insight into what Hitchcock was trying to do; instead, Poague has seen fit to interpret the film according to certain generic concepts borrowed from Stanley Cavell, William Rothman, et al. Now, I'm not saying that a film is never greater, or other, than the sum of its maker's intentions. But in this case what seems to have occurred is that Poague has been guilty of a common critical failing. He has allowed his theories and his subjective knowledge to box him in. Alleged similarities between *Vertigo* (1958) and some films of Frank Capra (on which Poague is an authority) receive a stilted *a priori* interpretation ...

'... In addition what follows represents an extension to the article on *Vertigo* and its sources that I wrote for 'MacGuffin' 11. There, I too drew a parallel: namely, between what I saw as a key aspect of *Vertigo*, its vitalism, and Arthur Schopenhauer's term "Will", or "life-force", which in fact has a long tradition, spanning West and East. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia", written in the 19th century, thrice quotes this revealing passage from "Lux Orentalis"/"Light of the East" by English theologian Joseph Glanvill (1636-80):

> *And the will ... dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigour? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doeth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*

'I'll explain. First, notice how Glanvill, anticipating Schopenhauer (1788-1860), contrasts the imperishable - but destructive - will with human mortality. In "Ligeia", the eponymous first wife of the story's narrator seems to return miraculously to life, as if embodying will itself. ...

'Leland Poague tells us that "little of substance is finally left unsaid in either *Vertigo* or ... *It's a Wonderful Life*. Citing Peter Brook's "The Melodramatic Imagination" (1976), Poague assigns to *Vertigo* a number of characteristics of melodrama ...

'... Typically, Poague *insists* on his interpretation. The reader is told that "apart from grasping [the notion 'that *Hitchcock* is the film's primary token of unknownness'] ... there is no way of comprehending the power and poignancy of the film's last shot". ...

'Now, I would concur with a reading that says an aspect of the last scene, at the level of plot, is Scottie's lack of "acknowledgment" of Judy, at least up until this moment. (Though perhaps not even now. Scottie's exclamation of "I made it" seems as revealing of basic self-centredness as Manny's "Do you realise what you've done to my wife?" at the end of *The Wrong Man*.) But such an attitude of Scottie's in the past also illustrates the Schopenahauerian/ Kierkegaardian point that most of us fail to properly deal with the *particular* in life - occasioning in *Vertigo* Judy's lament that Scottie isn't treating her authentically. In turn, a reason for that is Scottie's "Faustian" ambitiousness ...

'... I think it's ludicrous of Poague to claim that a shot of Madeleine's garments on an impromptu clothesline in Scottie's apartment must represent "a direct allusion" to a scene in Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934); or that *Vertigo* is "aptly" to be compared to Preston Sturges's *The Lady Eve* (1941) simply because both are about the ups and downs of human existence and have things like dream-sequences (with an avuncular British villain) in common. Any experienced film teacher remembers plenty of occasions when a film shown to a class on Monday had seemed to possess "marvellous correspondences" to a quite unrelated film shown to a different class on Thursday - if you take my meaning. But I'd have thought it a *sine qua non* that such a teacher should quickly learn to distinguish the authentic connection from the fortuitous. I'm not sure that Poague has done that here. As for his claims that *Vertigo* alludes directly to the Capra films mentioned, those claims simply lack all proof. By contrast, when I sometimes tell people that a couple of scenes in *Mr and Mrs Smith* (the Mama Lucy's episodes) are adapted from ones in King Vidor's *The Citadel* (1938), filmed in England and starring Hitchcockian actor Robert Donat, the borrowing is both palpable and demonstrable. Also Hitchcock's great admiration for *Vidor*'s films is on record ...

'Several times, Poague's approach to *Vertigo* is so "theoretical" that he fails to see or hear accurately what occurs. In the Muir Woods [Big Basin] scene, "a fantasticlly evanescent Madeleine" doesn't in fact accuse *Scottie* of "having taken ... no notice": she apostrophises "God". ("Here I was born and here I died. It was only a moment for you.") Judy-as-Madeleine-as-Carlotta is here playing at being "eternal" (or "eternally recurrent"), no doubt as Gavin Elster had instructed her to do - with the intention of trading on Scottie's sense of weakness, his "Faustian" longing for power and/or escape. ...

'... So I'll conclude thus. Given Cavell's transcendental-romantic sympathies (not least to the New England transcendentalists of the 19th century), and his particular indebtedness, recalling Schopenhauer's, to Kant, I sense that Poague's esposal of his (Cavell's) work isn't so far removed in spirit from my own of Schopenhauer's. Perhaps the present article has been no more than a trailer.'

(c) Lastly, here's a synopsis of *High Heels* (Spain, 1991) ...

Becky, a pop singer, has had almost as many husbands as gold discs. After her second husband, *Alberto*, had died unexpectedly, she had flown to Mexico with rising TV journalist *Manuel*, leaving behind in Spain her daughter from her

first marriage, *Rebecca*. Becky's new affair hadn't lasted, but she had stayed in Mexico for the sake of her career. Manuel had returned home. Meanwhile, Rebecca was raised by her father though never losing her obsession with her absent mother. Eventually she had married Manuel. Now she's a newsreader for the Spanish TV station where her husband is an executive director.

Not surprisingly perhaps, when Becky flies in to do a concert in Madrid, the reunion that follows is not without tension. Mother and daughter haven't seen each other in fifteen years. Becky is shocked to find whom Rebecca has married, and Manuel is shocked too - Rebecca hadn't told him that she was Becky's daughter! That evening, the three of them attend a performance by a drag artist called *Femme Letal*, whose name means 'lethal woman'. He specialises in miming Becky's old songs. Manuel is hostile to him, but Rebecca, who has always been a devoted admirer, goes backstage and secretly has sex with him.

Next morning, Manuel is found murdered, and the investigating *Judge Dominguez* learns that three women visited him that night: Becky, Rebecca, and *Isabel*, who is a co-worker with Rebecca at the TV station. All three plead their innocence, but later, while announcing the murder on the news, Rebecca breaks down and confesses to the crime. Though she is arrested and imprisoned, Dominguez doubts her guilt, especially after his own invalid mother's scrapbook of cuttings shows that Manuel was once Becky's lover. In jail, Rebecca sees a picture of a fellow inmate's boyfriend, *Hugo*, a drug dealer who bears a strong resemblance to Femme Letal and who is apparently killed after he turns out to be a police informer. Rebecca also realises that she is pregnant by Femme Letal.

Rebecca's arrest had coincided with Becky's concert, and Becky dedicates her first song to her daughter. As Dominguez proceeds with his investigations, a couple of further twists occur. The judge tells Rebecca that he is Femme Letal, one of a number of personas he has adopted to penetrate the underworld, and that he is in love with her. Also, Becky collapses on stage, and, rushed to hospital, discloses that she has a fatal illness. Mother and daughter are reconciled. Though Rebecca had indeed killed Manuel, Becky gladly covers for her. Their shared secret will go with her to the grave.

Engendering (More) *Vertigo*

Article by Leland Poague

[Editor's note. My response to Professor Poague immediately follows his article printed here.]

I BEGAN "ENGENDERING *VERTIGO*" by referring to the repetition that sounds throughout Hitchcock's film and throughout the discourse that has followed in the film's disturbing, melancholic wake.[1] Ken Mogg concludes "Engendering the Truth about *Vertigo*" - having 'read and re-read Professor Poague's 37-page article' - by evoking a critical homology or genealogy: as Poague to Cavell, so is Mogg to Schopenhauer, though the latter two, by essay's end, are pictured as having something like priority, as if the best I could do, in trailing Cavell, were to follow the wrong trail, or the wrong man.[2]

I take this evocation as a gesture of identification and apology, a way of atoning for the revenge-fantasy of the article proper wherein I stand accused not only of inaccurate descriptions of the film but of theoretical fixity or Faustian obsessiveness. It therefore comes as a happy surprise, in Mogg's last two sentences, when he allows that my 'espousal of his (Cavell's) work isn't so far removed in spirit from [his] own of Schopenhauer's'. In which case Mogg's 'article has been no more than a trailer' of my own - 'Perhaps' (p. 23). Of course, a cinematic trailer comes *before* the film it trails. Moreover, the film described in the trailer is often quite unlike the film one finally sees. So 'perhaps' I should not be surprised that the essay Mogg describes often seems far removed from the essay I (thought I) wrote. Whether more words can leap or bridge the distance remains, perforce, to be seen.

To the charge of theoretical fixity I plead guilty; it was exactly the point of my essay as published to question the extent to which *Vertigo* participates in Cavell's 'melodrama of the unknown woman' genre and, hence, negates (while yet evoking) various features of the Hollywood comedy of remarriage. In doing so, furthermore, I also invoked the larger body of scholarship regarding melodrama and the woman's film, chiefly Peter Brooks's 'The Melodramatic Imagination' (readers wishing to pursue the Brooks/Cavell connection should consult 'Contesting Tears', where Cavell contests, along Kantian lines, the Brooksian association of morality and the sacred.)[3] What I find most uncanny about Mogg's insistence upon my insistence is that he evinces my 'inflexibility' chiefly by (repeated) reference to a passage where I am, rather in passing, agreeing with Bill Rothman's claim that Hitchcock is *Vertigo*'s primary token of 'unknownness'. 'Apart from grasping that fact', I say, 'there is no way of comprehending the power and poignancy of the film's last shot.' (p. 27).

Let me grant the emphatic tone of the passage. But note what I am really claiming: that to understand the film's last shot requires some understanding of Hitchcock's unknownness, some acknowledgment of his link with Judy, some way of taking her nameless fear as an echo of some quality attributable to the film more generally, hence to its 'maker' more generally. As a quasi-empirical claim, the assertion depends on simple parallelism: Judy leaves the space of the tower, as does the camera. And if, by orthodox auteurist warrant, the camera is equatable with the maker-director, then Hitchcock is equatable with Judy. (My subsequent claim that Judy and the camera both 'hover' is confirmed in the newly restored print by the fact that we do not hear Judy strike the roof tiles - where we most emphatically do hear Madeleine's crash-landing.) Of course, a person can discuss his or her understanding of *Vertigo* without discussing the last shot - but my explicit claim is more specific, almost tautological: that understanding the 'power and poignancy' of the last shot of the film requires taking it as the last shot of 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*' (as the credit reads). To be sure, 'Hitchcock' is no simple category, and my agreement with Rothman certainly implies that some account of Hitchcock's 'femininity' is necessary to any latter-day grasp of the movie. But I still find Mogg's fixation on this particular line of my 37-page essay a little (shall we say) dizzying - especially so when my 'insistence' on the Judy/Hitchcock link in the film's last shot is not exclusionary, does not necessarily deny other connotations and influences, of which Mogg adduces many.

Indeed, Mogg devotes most of his (12+ page) article to a series of empirical/historical claims about 'specific' influences on *Vertigo*, most of them urged as alternatives to my own intertextual reading of the film. I cannot do justice, in brief, to Mogg's pre-history of the film, which not only links Hitchcock to Poe to Schopenhauer (via Glanvill's anticipation of the latter) and Hitchcock to Poe to Simenon (via Narcejac and Boileau) but also manages, with help from Cavell, to draw in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (via Ibsen). And then there is a Spengler-Paglia-Goethe branch of *Vertigo*'s family tree to describe, which description finally allows Mogg to distinguish between a good ('open') Faustianism, where 'opposites are transcended' (p. 15), and a 'bad' Faustianism, which involves a willed (hence Schopenhauerean) assertion of a concept over a particular - as when Manny Balestrero blames his wife's despair on the (other) wrong man in *The Wrong Man*. This is, per Mogg, Scottie's crime: his 'single-visioned' insistence that Judy, say, become Madeleine, for which *Vertigo* itself stands as indictment and (hence) as cautionary remedy. And it is my crime as well, on Mogg's account, to the extent that my elaboration of the (Cavellian) intertext of *Vertigo* is equally willful, compassionless, self-obsessed.

Having pleaded guilty as (theoretically) charged, I am disinclined to contest Mogg's alternative account of *Vertigo*'s genesis and inheritance in detail. To the charges of inaccurate description and neglect of duty - the latter implicit in Mogg's regret that I neglected to engage his 'MacGuffin' 11 discussion of the film - I also plead guilty, sort of, though under mitigating circumstances (see below).

Mogg is right, that is, about my error in depicting Hitchcock, during his walk-on, as toting a flashlight. Mogg is wrong, however, in claiming that Judy is talking to God rather than to Scottie during the Muir Woods sequence. Of course, Judy is saying things she wants Scottie to hear, so that he will continue to read her as 'Madeleine', as possessed. In that sense, she speaks 'to' Scottie, though hers are 'mock' speech acts, are not 'for' Scottie. Madeleine, however, talks - if she 'talks' at all - not to Scottie, nor to God, but to the tree, or its cross section: 'Somewhere in here I was born, and there I died. It was only a moment for you; you took no notice.' I grant that 'you' can be plural. But when Scottie asks 'Madeleine' what she was thinking of, just before they stroll over to the cross section (Scottie leads her there as if to deny her very thought, by distraction), she replies: 'Of all the people who've been born and have died while the trees went on living.' Trees live, people die, and Judy has Madeleine declare herself already dead by reference to, by directly addressing and rebuking, the tree she takes as having ignored her demise. My linking this rebuke to Scottie - as being directed to him - assumes that Judy is playing on his sense of guilt, his vertigo, at having caused the death of his colleague in the film's first sequence, a reminder not to ignore it. God is *not* her (most immediate) interlocutor.

A far more interesting question attends upon Mogg's larger claim - urged openly at some moments, allowed to slide into the background at others - to know more clearly than I 'what Hitchcock was trying to do' (p. 14). By and large, Mogg presses that claim by reference to sources and analogs, to 'specific' influences that (apparently) exceed in pertinence and proximity the intertextual references sketched out in my Cavellian analysis of the film, though it involves, as well, the view that I use the melodrama-*Vertigo* link as a way of avoiding or slighting the history of patriarchal oppressiveness. (How Mogg's alertness to patriarchy is more sustained or historical than my own is hard to figure; as most of my references in the *Vertigo* sections of my paper were to feminist analyses of the film, I assumed that the issue was already sufficiently historicized, at least for my purposes.)

It is plain, however, that Mogg's argument is less historical than interpretive. That is, while he adduces some 'historical' facts - that Hitchcock read Poe, that Narcejac read (and wrote about) Simenon before co-authoring the novel upon which *Vertigo* was (very loosely) based - most of the evidence on view in Mogg's "Engendering the Truth" is a matter of 'parallels', of 'correspondences', of Jungian and Freudian 'scenarios'. Though Mogg declares that my assertion of a

Hitchcock/Capra parallel - via a similarity between Scottie's impromptu clothesline in *Vertigo* and the blanket-and-clothesline 'Wall of Jericho' in *It Happened One Night* - 'simply lacks all proof' (p. 19), his ostensibly contrasting claim that a scene in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* echoes one from King Vidor's *The Citadel* is subsequently confirmed by reference to the latter film's production venue (England), its cast ('Hitchcockian actor Robert Donat'), and Hitchcock's on-the-record admiration for Vidor (p. 20). I don't know if Hitchcock admired Capra, but it is hardly possible he was unfamiliar with Capra's films, especially not given the echoes of *It Happened One Night* in the hotel scene of *The 39 Steps*. Both *It Happened* and *Vertigo* were shot, for the most part, in Hollywood; and it's hard to imagine a more 'Capraesque' actor than Jimmy Stewart. Does the lack of 'admiration' of Hitchcock for Capra, then, settle this question, make it obvious that one of these parallels (Vidor/Hitchcock) is 'authentic', the other (Capra/Hitchcock) is 'fortuitous' (p. 19)? Obviously not. Put another way, where 'parallels' and 'correspondences' are at issue, the only appeal is to the interpretive pertinence of the similarities adduced.

Moreover, we are talking about similarity here, not identity. At some level, at least, Mogg wants to deny that 'marriage' or 'acknowledgment' - in the quasi-technical sense employed by Cavell and Rothman - is Hitchcock's deepest subject. Indeed, Mogg's more-or-less implicit claim that his pre-history of *Vertigo* is the real or 'historical' pre-history of *Vertigo* is itself an emphatically interpretive gesture, an assertion that the film is in some sense better, one's understanding of it truer (to something: to Hitchcock?), if it is read against the background he provides. Where I follow Rothman and Cavell in discussing Scottie's 'feminine' sense of himself, both embodied and denied in Madeleine/Judy, Mogg wants to say that the film (especially its last shot) enacts the Schopenhauerean scenario in which 'the world is an endless round of suffering', in which Scottie's distress is only troped by his obsession with Madeleine, such 'that Scottie is simply a discontented all-rounder' (p. 22) who fails, like most of us, 'to properly deal with the *particular* in life' (p. 19). And Mogg argues this contention, I contend, by means of what I must call, evoking Scottie's projection of himself onto Judy, 'over identification'.

He says, for example, that I adduce the case (which I called 'self-evident') that *The Lady Eve* and *Vertigo* 'are alike' in order to claim 'they're both "comedies of remarriage"' (p. 21). I never make the latter claim.[4] I argue, rather, that *Vertigo* is an example of 'the melodrama of the unknown woman' genre described by Cavell, and I cite its evocations and negations of various clauses of the remarriage comedy scenario in support of that claim, though usually in a conditional voice, as in the following passage regarding the 'echoes of remarriage' in *Vertigo*: 'To the extent that we find the happiness pictured in remarriage comedy as honorable, as livable, to that extent we are bound to honor Judy and Scottie as having aspirations akin to our own' (p. 35). Where I urge similarity, hence a crucial difference, Mogg reads identity. Indeed, a primary tactic in Mogg's compare-and-contrast assessment of my interpretation is to adduce counter examples that are more appropriate, truer, that (here I interpret Mogg) correspond in greater detail, more authentically, to *Vertigo*. Thus, after allowing some link of Hitchcock to remarriage, he asks: 'But what of a play like Goethe's "Faust" ... [,] a story like Poe's "Ligeia", and a film like William Dieterle's *Portrait of Jennie* (1948) - all of which have correspondences in *Vertigo*? In at least one of those works, marriage is never an issue; in two of them, comedy is virtually absent. On the other hand, they *all* seem to me very much concerned with matters of Will and its permutations ...' (p. 19).

Though it is unlikely that a discussion of *Vertigo* is going to settle the question of whether Cavell or Schopenhauer provides the better picture of human existence or behaviors, it seems clear enough that a primary function of art works and art criticism is to keep the debate alive, to allow contention over matters of 'depth' - hence the endless desire for and denial of 'foundational' understandings. The tuition I am taking from Mogg's response to my analysis of *Vertigo* is less philosophical, more procedural. To say that X is *more* like Y than it is like Z does not entail that there is *no similarity* between X and Z, nor does it settle the question of the interpretive weight that such a similarity can or should bear. Such weightings are exactly the business of criticism and can only be disputed by counter weightings, by other readings and readers. Moreover, it is worth observing that the field of comparisons is far from stable; that is, it is less obvious than Mogg apparently believes that Goethe's *Faust* is a likelier or more apt intertextual companion of *Vertigo* than *The Lady Eve* or *Obsession* or *Taxi Driver*. Indeed, it is exactly *because* most latter-day viewers of *Vertigo* are likelier to see it through *Taxi Driver* than through Schopenhauer that the gesture of urging a different intertext has interpretive claim and force, *can* yield a different understanding of the previously understood. Interpretation is always a matter of 'aspect seeing', seeing the text through the interpretive lenses the world has variously given us, seeing the world through the texts we subsequently construct and urge on others. There is no end to it - short of death. (Is *that* where *Vertigo* ends?)

Where "Engendering *Vertigo*' began was a phone call inquiring whether I would write something, anything, about the connection of Alfred Hitchcock to Pedro Almodóvar for inclusion in a catalogue to accompany an Almodóvar retrospective scheduled for the 1993 Venice Biennale. I was teaching a class on melodrama, another on Cavell and Frank Capra; some of the thoughts deriving from that teaching circumstance seemed nearly ready to write up, though I knew very little about Almodóvar at the time, and had less than two months to work with, while doing all my other work. The

curator gave me the go-ahead to pursue the line of argument that became "Engendering *Vertigo*" - in the hope that I would bring Almodóvar into the essay. I eventually did, though in a 'coda' faxed off at the last minute. (These are the 'mitigating circumstances' I alluded to earlier, circumstances which made reading everything ever written about *Vertigo* quite impossible.) To the best of my knowledge the complete essay has never seen print; I've no idea what happened to the retrospective, or the catalog. Though Mogg is right to see me as following, in that sense 'trailing', Cavell - though I am grateful to Mogg for following my essay with his own, generously describing his as the 'trailer', hence mine implicitly as the 'feature' - there is a sense in which both our essays are trailers of the short subject that follows, in which the connection of Hitchcock to remarriage comedy to melodrama is further elaborated in an analysis of Almodóvar's *High Heels (Tacones Lejanos,* 1991), at the time his most recent film, which I take as a parodic remake of *Vertigo*.[5]

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That Pedro Almodóvar is generally indebted to Alfred Hitchcock is powerfully confirmed by *High Heels*. An essay should be written on the relationship of *High Heels* to *Rebecca*, for example, and not only because the mother and daughter at the center of *High Heels* share versions of the same Hitchcockian name: Becky del Paramo (Marisa Paredes) and Rebecca Giner (Victoria Abril). The homoerotic subtext of Hitchcock's study of female possession and dispossession rises far closer to the textual surface in Almodóvar's fable of female inheritance. Like Hitchcock's never-seen Rebecca, pop-cum-torch singer Becky del Paramo is shadowed by a faithful female servant (Mrs. Danvers in Hitchcock, Marga in Almodóvar) and carries the secret of a life-threatening disease (Rebecca's secret is cancer, which she sardonically represents to Max as pregnancy, or so he reports to Joan Fontaine's character; Becky's heart is failing, a failure linked in various agonizing ways to her troubled history as Rebecca's mother). The Joan Fontaine character's desire to replace Rebecca in her husband's affections, which verges on a desire to *become* Rebecca, 'Mrs. De Winter', is variously troped in *High Heels* in the way Rebecca Giner marries Manuel (Feodore Atkine), her mother's former lover, for example; in the way Rebecca cheats on her husband with Femme Letal, a female impersonator who mimics her mother's pop-phase songs and style in his stage act. And there is always the fact that both films end with a literal transfer of guilt that has the effect of isolating central characters from the world they inhabit by virtue of an attendant secrecy. Though provoked by Rebecca, Max did deliver the blow that resulted in her death, a death which will doubtless be ruled (like Madeleine's in *Vertigo*) a suicide. Likewise, though she too is provoked, Almodóvar'ts Rebecca *did* fire the bullet that killed Manuel, yet Becky's last gesture before dying is to impress the murder weapon with her own fingerprints so the investigating judge can clear her daughter of the charge.

A similar essay should be written comparing *High Heels* and Hitchcock's *Marnie*. Various pieces of the Hitchcock film are displaced across the text of Almodóvar's. Bernice Edgar's letter-sweater - received in exchange for the sexual favor that resulted in Marnie - comes back in Almodóvar as the leather jacket (with a big block 'W' on the back) that Rebecca's friend Paula had given to her ex-boyfriend cum drug dealer cum police snitch, Hugo; the jacket becomes, or so it seems, the token of his death when Paula sees it in the possession of a female prisoner of the jail where Rebecca is incarcerated during the murder investigation. Marnie's distanced relationship with her mother is interpreted in the relationship of Becky and Rebecca; when Manuel tells Becky that Rebecca had reported her 'as good as dead' before Rebecca and he were married, I can't help hearing Marnie telling Mark (among other versions of her ancestry) that her father had deserted her and that her mother had been dead since Marnie was 18. Indeed, mother/daughter distance in both cases is troped via something like frigidity - Marnie can't stand to be touched; Rebecca, though loving her 'monstrous' husband, has had no sex for months until the night of Becky's return from Mexico when Rebecca and Femme Letal engage in a wild bout of sexual gymnastics in Letal's drag-club dressing room. And there is always the fact that, in each of these two films, it is the investigating male figure who falls in love with the woman of his study and proposes (demands) marriage -- Mark with Marnie, Judge Dominguez with (a now pregnant, by Femme Letal) Rebecca.

Perhaps Almodóvar's most telling refiguring of Hitchcock's *Marnie* comes in the sustained association of a traumatic childhood past with the color red. Hitchcock's practice on this account is the more spectacular, in that the many obtrusive 'red suffusion' sequences in *Marnie* are eventually motivated in the equally obtrusive fish-eye flashback to the child-version of Marnie killing Bruce Dern's sailor with a fireplace poker, spilling vibrant red blood across the background of his white t-shirt. It amounts (among other things) to a parable of sexual violation, of Bernice by the sailor, of Marnie by men generally. Primary colours, though red especially, are threaded throughout *High Heels* (often *as* high heels). In the film's opening sequence, for example, Rebecca waits in the airport for her mother's arrival from Mexico. She wears a white suit and carries a large red purse (another echo of Marnie, though Marnie's is yellow) and is surrounded by bright red airport seating, not to mention the red-winged aircraft in the background. From this we dissolve to the Isla Margarita where a red-and-white clad Becky, on vacation with her second husband and Rebecca, buys her daughter a pair of earrings to match her own. In response to losing one, Rebecca wanders off, becomes a 'lost daughter'; when Alberto and Becky find her, Rebecca's step-father traumatizes the little girl by pretending to sell her to locals for (literally) coconuts, as a potential sex-slave, one can't help but imagine, like Bernice Edgar. Soon thereafter,

while playing with her red-and-blue spin-top toy, the young Rebecca overhears Alberto and her mother squabbling over Becky's showbiz career (shades of the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*!). So little Rebecca proceeds to switch Alberto's pills, downers for uppers and vice versa, in order to set her mother free. It works, as Rebecca learns from watching a television news report of Alberto's asleep-at-the-wheel car-crash demise while she rests against a large red cushion. It matters more than a little that Becky finally returns to Madrid dressed top to toe in bright red, that Femme Letal's costume is also red-on-red during the first performance we see at the Villarosa, and that Manuel is clad in cherry-red pajamas when the stressed out Rebecca plugs him one month later.

The intertextual relationship of *High Heels* and *Vertigo* is equally as significant if somewhat more difficult to specify. That it *must* be specified, and under the sign of Almodóvar's family name, is signaled in the credit sequence of *High Heels*. Just before Pedro's directing credit comes on - featuring a silhouette profile of the director and his camera against a bright red background - Augustin's credit as executive producer comes up. It is a triptych, the centre panel of which is abstractly graphic, as of cubist blue planes receding to a centre point, like a passageway or colonnade, but the left-most panel is a tight close-up of a woman's eye, and the right-most panel is an image taken (as if) directly from the swirling computer graphic portion of *Vertigo*'s credit sequence. Images that Hitchcock had condensed by superimposition - the eye, the vortex - Almodóvar has thus displaced, split up, made separate. But that separation also suggests linkage or similarity.

There is an obviously 'Spanish' quality to *Vertigo* that makes it an apposite intertext for *High Heels*. We might even think of Becky as a cabaret singer from somewhere to the south of San Francisco - which would make her the avatar of Carlotta Valdes. And here again we have an investigating officer, Judge Dominguez (Miguel Bosé), whose identity crisis is more than hinted at by a corset that we know he's prone to wear - in that Judge Dominguez is obsessed with being his own underworld informer by means of class and gender shape-shifting; sometimes he's Hugo the junkie, sometimes Femme Letal the female mimic. But Dominguez/Letal is hardly at the centre of *High Heels* in the way that Scottie is at the centre of *Vertigo*. Which means that the evocation of remarriage comedy in *Vertigo* is not matched in Almodóvar's retelling of the story - despite Rebecca's pregnancy, despite the judge's marriage proposal -- if only because Dominguez/Letal never learns the truth about Manuel's murder. Scottie knows, and forgives. Letal does neither - even if he gets to make the film's only emphatic reference to a classical Hollywood comedy in telling Rebecca, as Joe E. Brown tells a wigless Jack Lemmon in *Some Like It Hot*, that 'Nobody's perfect'.

Put another way, if Scottie is, by implication or interpretation, both the lost daughter and the searching mother in *Vertigo*, Almodóvar presents a far more literal and more melodramatic interpretation of the mother/daughter tangle. Here it is Rebecca who seems lost in the past. Indeed, her affair with Letal is an affair with the 1970s version of her mother; during Letal's first performance his wig is a match for the hairdo that Becky sports in the sequence when (the younger) Manuel asks her for an interview, which is quickly followed by Becky's refusal to take Rebecca with her to the Mexican film location, though she promises that, upon her return, they will always be together. Little does Becky know, at the time, that Rebecca had killed to make the Mexican trip possible. She will not know until the mother/daughter interview stage-managed by Dominguez/Letal that Rebecca had killed Alberto.

This latter confession scene is in many ways the passage where *High Heels* most deeply declares its melodramatic inheritance, hence its kinship to *Vertigo* and to Hitchcock. Here Rebecca delivers a classic 'aria of divorce' - though she offers her confession in the form of film criticism, taking her relationship to Becky as figured by the mother/daughter relationship in Ingmar Bergman's *Autumn Sonata*. She even speaks in the voice of Ingrid Bergman's mother figure, who declares her daughter's piano-playing a vulgar 'imitation' of her own, as if the daughter were only a 'shadow'. Rebecca, we might say, understands herself here - as Scottie understands Judy and himself alike in *Vertigo* -[6] as a 'copy', as a 'counterfeit'. Though she killed Alberto in order to advance her mother's career, to give Becky back her voice, Rebecca experiences herself as unheard. When a penitent Becky asks what she can do, Rebecca replies 'You can only listen'. In that sense, like George Bailey in *It's A Wonderful Life*, like Scottie Ferguson in *Vertigo*, Rebecca experiences herself as unborn, as unknown. Indeed, it's as if Rebecca had given birth to 'Becky' before Becky could finish giving birth to Rebecca. How difficult giving birth or claiming it can be is fully displayed in Rebecca's incoherent declaration that she had wanted Becky to live her own life so that Becky could keep her promise never to separate from Rebecca.

The existential difficulty pictured in Rebecca's desire to be both mother and daughter, connected yet separate, is elaborated with great delicacy in Almodóvar's handling of both incident and narration in *High Heels*. We hardly need emphasize how the 'imitation' theme is played out in Letal's female mimicry, which is troped again via his lip-sync singing and his cross-dresser chorus. (A similar emphasis on coordinated action is evoked in the happily Godardian dance sequence that takes place in the exercise yard of the women's prison.) A recurrent visual motif, moreover, involves a whole series of reflected images that leave the viewer uncertain of their provenance; are we seeing *through* the

glass, to an object on the other side, or are we seeing a reflecting surface, which yields up a reverse image of something from the opposite visual field?

Against this pattern of uncertainty or reversibility the film establishes certain facts unequivocally - mostly having to do with male villainy. This is most obviously the case with Becky's second husband, whose monologue on wifely duties marks him as a second cousin to *Gaslight*'s Gregory. Though we never know why Becky and her first husband broke up, it is the case that he collaborates in the scheme to separate Becky and Rebecca on the occasion of the Mexican film shoot. Manuel's initial relation to Becky is undercut by the way the one shot of their Mexican idyll together resembles the seaside kiss of 'Madeleine' and Scottie in *Vertigo*; what we see of him in Madrid, a scowl on his face and a gun in his pants, is unappealing from first to last. His status as a melodramatic male villain is established via the television show he watches while waiting for Becky to arrive for dinner; while women apply red lipstick, a voice-over narrator informs us that Theatre, music, and dance were solely for the monarchy to enjoy'. Rebecca is attracted to him *only*, or so we can infer, because he used to be Becky's lover. (Is the same also true for Becky on her second go-around with Manuel? Such is Rebecca's accusation in her aria.) For that matter, Isabel, this film's 'mute woman', who sits beside Rebecca during newscasts and signs the stories as Rebecca reads them, is sexually involved with Manuel only for mercenary reasons. And even Femme Letal is tainted, however positive his shape-shifter inclinations might be, in the heartbreak he brings to Paula, which Rebecca does not allow him to forget.

The world of *High Heels* is thus similar in its psychological and social structure to the Hegelian world of *Vertigo*, split, as if forever, between men and women. There seems no healing balm for this. What healing we see takes two forms, and always as between women, though men, melodramatically enough, remain the source of pain. Paula and Rebecca both resort to picture-taking as a way of memorializing lost love. (This 'picture' motif is taken up by Letal's mother, with her scrapbooks of celebrities, and by Becky, whose walls are awash with family photographs.) The other balm is also a matter of swirling images, of prints; call them fingerprints, the ones that Becky leaves on Manuel's gun. In thus becoming a 'lethal woman', Becky gets a second chance at giving birth to Rebecca; the film's last shot evokes this birth trauma in its vision of an exhausted mother lying next to a crying child. Indeed, the blue walls of the room and the framed photo at screen center evoke the passageway panel of the '*Vertigo*' credit triptych. To the extent that Rebecca accepts this birth, this passage, she becomes something more than a shadow, though nothing more than a reproduction, as are we all. Yet finitude has its pleasures, among them the pleasure of connecting, of discovering reality together in the mesh and clash of fantasy. Thus does Almodóvar make Hitchcock that much more real for me. Cut. Print.

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Notes

1. L. Poague, "Engendering *Vertigo*", 'Hitchcock Annual' (1994), pp. 18-54.
2. K. Mogg, "Engendering the Truth about *Vertigo*: thoughts on an article by Leland Poague in the 1994 'Hitchcock Annual'", 'The MacGuffin', no. 17 (November, 1995), p. 14. See also Mogg's "The Fragments of the Mirror: *Vertigo* (1958) and its Sources", 'The MacGuffin', no. 11 (November, 1993), pp. 7-22.
3. See P. Brooks, 'The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess' (New Haven: Yale UP, 1976) and S. Cavell, 'Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman' (Chicago: Uni. of Chicago Press, 1996), especially pp. 39-43.
4. Let me quickly acknowledge that my sentence-level formulations of the 'intricate relation' (p. 36) of *Vertigo* to remarriage comedy - as 'participating' in it, as 'inheriting' it - allow Mogg's construal, though the larger drift of my argument is also, I believe, clearly announced, and I never, in fact, assert that *Vertigo* is a comedy of remarriage, however much the generic story is evoked. In rereading the original essay, I am struck by just how 'intricate' the relation of remarriage comedy and melodrama can become, so I take Mogg as responding to an important implication of the essay, if at some cost to his grasp of my basic claim.
5. For an alternative analysis of the melodramatic aspect of *High Heels* see L. Fischer, 'Cinematernity: Film, Motherhood, Genre' (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), pp. 162-178. [Editor's note. 'Almodóvar on Almodóvar' (Faber & Faber, 1995), edited by Frederic Strauss, contains two or three pages in which the director talks about his admiration of Hitchcock's films.]
6. She a 'copy' or 'counterfeit' of Madeleine, he of Elster.

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The Citadel, such a match-up by me is no more valid than his own involving the clothesline episodes in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night*. Well, that's nonsense. Hitchcock's 'borrowing' in *Mr and Mrs Smith* is, as I say, 'palpable and demonstrable'. Just run the two films. By contrast, Poague's Capra-Hitchcock parallel, I now repeat, 'simply lacks all proof'.

But such failure to attend - and to hold scrupulously to a high standard of what constitutes evidence - is typical of Poague's article (I'm sorry to say), and was certainly one of the things I was most concerned to note in my original piece. And now Poague's latest offering, above, contains distortions and a questionable tone of its own. (As to whether Poague's attempt to link *High Heels* to *Vertigo* is any more valid or convincing than a similar attempt that might be made to link Almodóvar's film to, say, *Citizen Kane*, is something I must largely leave the reader to decide.) So here are some further responses by me to what Poague has lately written. I specifically deny that any 'revenge-fantasy' is involved in what I say here. Moreover, I'm deeply grateful to Professor Poague for his 'MacGuffin' piece, and for the courteous tone of all his correspondence with me by letter and email. He is very welcome to take the matter further in these pages.

Working from the top now. First, I think Poague may indeed have followed 'the wrong trail, or the wrong man' (para. 1)! My original article, beyond its Schopenhauer references, was concerned to suggest that *Camille Paglia*'s remarkable 'Sexual Personae' (1990) may ultimately prove a far more estimable contribution to cultural studies - painting, literature, film, etc. - than anything produced by the 'Harvard school' of Cavell, Rothman, Keane. The main reason? Paglia's truly acute, no-nonsense, superbly penetrating eye - and the lucidity of virtually every unencumbered sentence filling her brilliant book ...

I shall do no more than note a certain snideness in parts of Poague's response to mine. One instance (I think): much of para. 2.

I'm grateful for the compact explanation by Poague (para. 3) of what his "Engendering *Vertigo*" was aimed at doing. It wasn't stated so succinctly there!

I'm rather at a loss to reconcile the last sentences of, respectively, paragraphs 3 and 4. If there is 'no way' except one of 'comprehending the power and poignancy of [*Vertigo*'s] last shot', something that Poague 'insists' on, then it comes as a surprise to me to be told that such an insistence 'does not necessarily deny other connotations and influences', i.e., with their own power and poignancy.

I'm *happy* to note Poague's reference (following Cavell and Rothman) to Hitchcock's 'femininity' (para. 4) - something that I assumed in the last 'MacGuffin', apropos *Rear Window*. (I'd touched on it previously: e.g., in 'MacGuffin' 12, reviewing Theodore Price's 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', and 'MacGuffin' 15, in relation to Dr Brulov in *Spellbound*, whom I called a 'male mother'.)

Poague has suitably summarised in a couple of sentences at the end of para. 5 a major thrust of my original argument. But he has distorted (or misunderstood) one or two points just before this. The 'open' type of Faustianism I was referring to is *not* necessarily a matter of transcending opposites (that merely happens to be what Helen of Troy arguably means to Faust), but of being 'open to all experience', something which the Romantics quested for - p. 14 and p. 17. (One such Romantic was Schopenhauer.) And 'a willed ... assertion of a concept over a particular [circumstance]' is decidedly *not* 'Schopenhauerian' - for a couple of reasons. One: Schopenhauer wanted the very opposite state of affairs to prevail, and regretted that it seldom did so. Two: human willing, in the popular sense of assertion or wanting (which Poague seems to mean here, though I may be wrong) is only an accompaniment of, a tiny part of, the working of the world's 'Will' (life-force).

Para. 6. What kind of self-defence is Poague offering here?! Still, if it's any comfort to him, let me note that I've also (on the Web) lately accused someone else, Professor Royal Brown, of being single-visioned, and hence 'neglectful of duty', concerning *Vertigo* - in Brown's case, re his 'Orphic' reading of that film. And once again, I expressed the wish that the person concerned had (by now) considered my piece in 'MacGuffin' 11, where I demonstrate how that film evokes *many* and *diverse* 'archetypes' and associations - but only in passing, one after the other. The effect is cumulative and cinematic rather than literary. To seek to rigorously interpret *Vertigo* as embodying the Orpheus myth - or the essence of Shakespearean remarriage comedy - is to invite a strained and even absurd misreading, I'd suggest ...

Let's take para. 7 slowly. What I objected to in Poague's saying that Hitchcock in *Vertigo* carries a flashlight was not the error itself but the elaborate, pretentious interpretation that Poague, Cavell-like, adduced from it. (Compare Cavell's wordy 'explanation' in one of his essays for why the title of *North by Northwest* alludes to 'Hamlet' - when we know that no such allusion was meant by the filmmakers. See the entry about that on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web

site.) Now, by 'pretentious' here, I only mean pretentious in this context. The point itself, that 'Hitchcock thus marks *himself* as mortal, as seeking no exemption' ('Annual', 1994 edition, p. 50), is precisely the one I made about Hitchcock's pre-credits appearance in *The Wrong Man*, when I analysed that film in 'MacGuffin' 6 (reprinted in revised and expanded form in 'MacGuffin' 20). I pointed out in my original response to Poague that he had failed to 'acknowledge' his (actual, physical) reading of my *Wrong Man* piece, which we had long ago corresponded about. Now he has done it again! Moreover, I'll show below that he has used another of my observations from 'MacGuffin' 6, this time about *Rebecca*, and yet again without 'acknowledgment' (whether of the special Cavell/Rothman kind or just the ordinary scholar's kind).

Still on para. 7. Yes, but ... Being pedantic now, I never wrote that *Judy* is talking to God rather than to Scottie in Muir Woods/Big Basin when she says, 'It was only a moment for you'. I wrote that it's *Madeleine*, and really *Judy-as-Madeleine-as-Carlotta*, who apostrophises God here (though I grant that the remark is ostensibly made to the tree, as Poague has now shown). She is thereby playing on Scottie's sense of weakness established both symbolically and actually in the film's opening scenes, i.e., Scottie's own sense of being mortal - as opposed, surely, to the *im*mortality of God. (For the 'eternal' aspect of *Vertigo*, and the symbolism of its missions and churches, as well as its forts, art galleries, shops, etc., see my article on that film in 'MacGuffin' 1. Then, for a precise reference by me to how Muir Woods/Big Basin is itself like a *cathedral*, see my article on *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 11.)

Para. 9. I'm wondering what precisely *is* the echo of *It Happened One Night* in the hotel scene of *The 39 Steps*?

Para. 10. Also, I'm wondering why Pogue keeps quoting unhelpfully, or in the wrong context, things I wrote? My point about Scottie's being 'a discontented all-rounder' was made to refute Poague's own notion that Scottie was inclined just to dwell with women (like Midge, for example), when there's no evidence, I think, that he didn't also drop in occasionally on male acquaintances, including some of his former buddies in the police force, or have them drop in on him. ('Being on the bum', as I understand it, basically means just being out of a job and drifting/'wandering'.) As for Poague's contention that I wanted to deny that 'acknowledgment' is Hitchcock's deepest subject, that is indeed true. The typical ending of a Hitchcock film, I wrote (p. 19), *isn't* necessarily asking selfishly, 'Why don't you acknowledge me?' And I cited the works of several outstanding authors to show how such a thing is indeed possible! (See, especially, p. 21.)

Para. 11. Poague says he never claimed that *The Lady Eve* and *Vertigo* are alike in being 'comedies of remarriage'. Well, he certainly compared them, and my point was that it's a rather wild comparison. And in footnote 4 to his present article he says that he never in fact asserted 'that *Vertigo* [by itself, alone] is a comedy of remarriage' - even though he did call *Vertigo* 'a failed comedy of remarriage' ('Annual', p. 35) and used similar expressions about it!

Para. 12 I wasn't so much asking whether Cavell or *Schopenhauer* 'provides the better picture of human existence or behaviours' as I was asking whether, at the level of practical criticism, Cavell or *Camille Paglia* is the better writer and the critic/scholar with the wider perspective. My answer to that is: Paglia. Taking all culture as her province, and wielding Nietzsche's Apollonian-versus-Dionysian distinction with far more acumen than, in the field of film writing, Royal Brown, she is an aesthete in the best sense and a brilliant perceiver - whose every pithy, quite un-Cavell-like sentence is a gem.

My own hope for an essay on *Vertigo* yet to be written - I'm unsure by whom - is that it might combine aspects of Schopenhauer (who provided Nietzsche with the basis of his theory of tragedy, and whose own writing spans West and East) and Paglia. The latter would understand every nuance of this very sexual - yet also in some ways, 'chaste' - film, and know how to speak of them meaningfully and with precision. The applicability of Schopenhauer to *Vertigo* I hope I have already sufficiently shown (e.g., in 'MacGuffins' 1, 8, 11, 17, et al.). Now, here's a personal (by me) observation about Stanley Cavell. Very soon after I started to read him, I realised who he and his 'methodology' reminded me of: it was myself, in my formative tertiary film-teaching days when I was being deeply influenced by my yoga teacher, Shri Vijayedev Yogendra, a sort of Krishnamurti figure. Many is the time that a film under discussion in my class would become for me the occasion of a discursive interpretation done impromptu and taking in all matters that seemed to me germane - and they would be many! The result might be both film analysis and (unashamed) cadenza, aesthetic discourse and Weltanschauung. Consequently we broke a lot of barriers and trespassed beyond the sort of film analysis available in the textbooks of the time.

Here's my point. From Veejay (Shri Vijayedev) I knew how vital it was, for everyone concerned, that you address a *particular* audience, and moreover that you refer in every sense to *particulars*. I also learned that you must be on your guard on these occasions against finding too many 'marvellous correspondences' between films and indeed whole topics - something to which I've referred in my earlier response to Poague. Reading Cavell, though, and especially the Cavell of the earlier books (rather than, say, 'Contesting Tears'), I detected few such precautions taken. Tania Modleski's gibe

that Cavell engaged 'in conversations with himself' seemed to me right-on. I also found Cavell's writing undisciplined and - much the same thing - arrogant.

Still on para. 12. Poague claims 'that the field of comparisons is far from stable', and I'm aware of what he means. But, for me, a whole outlook is involved here. From the East, I have learned to want to see 'things as they really are', and be prepared to shed the self in order to do so. (I'm still a learner, though.) In suggesting that we interpret *Vertigo* through the optic provided by *The Lady Eve* (near-risible?) or *Obsession* (understandable) or *High Heels* (questionable), Poague seems to me to be risking us in an arid, if fashionable, approach to film study: a mere exercise. A couple of recent cases in point come to mind, both from the 'Hitchcock Annual'. Lesley Brill's attempt to elucidate Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* by comparing it with DePalma's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* was a failure. Brill was clearly out of sympathy with the Hitchcock film to start with (without sympathy, or compassion, no true seeing, I believe ...), and his piece felt arbitary and stilted ('Annual', 1995 edition). Likewise, James M. Vest's attempt to expound Truffaut's *The Story of Adèle H.* - a film I deeply admire - by citing its echoes from several Hitchcock films, struck me again as only slightly pregnant, if I may so put it ('Annual', 1997-98 edition) ...

Finally, as promised, let me draw attention to another instance of where Poague has failed to 'acknowledge' me! In para. 14, he writes of *Rebecca*: 'Though provoked by Rebecca, Max did deliver the blow that resulted in her death, a death which will doubtless be ruled ... a suicide.' I'm pleased, in a way, that Poague feels that. As I pointed out in 'MacGuffin' 6 (which Poague read when it first came out), a couple of feminist film critics quoted in David Bordwell's 'Making Meaning' (1989) completely swallow Max's own assertion (or the Joan Fontaine character's) that Rebecca's death was accidental. My analysis showed how likely it was that Max did in fact 'kill her (as in the novel): he strikes her in one of his notorious temper tantrums, and she lives just long enough to give an "almost triumphant" smile' ('MacGuffin' 6, p. 8).

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(Reader response to any or all of the above is definitely invited.)

BLOOPERS

Once again thanks to Steven L. DeRosa for telling us about a slip (or two) in the latest 'MacGuffin' - this time the *Rear Window* issue. And the slips - plural - were this time just about all mine!

The 'theme-song' of *Rear Window* is not so much "Mona Lisa" as the piece of music on which the composer/song-writer seen in the film is working throughout and which is finally heard played in full orchestral form on a gramophone record in the film's final scene. By then the song has acquired *its* title, "Lisa".

(On our Web site recently, I noted how Hitchcock's 1933 musical drama, *Waltzes From Vienna*, uses a similar strategy of having a piece of music being composed throughout the film until it's given a public performance at the climax - a scene of reconciliation and general enjoyment.)

By contrast, the song "Mona Lisa", which had already won an Academy Award for its writers, Livingston & Evans, is heard *just once* in the film, ostensibly coming from a radio. As noted last time, that significant moment occurs when the film's Lisa (Grace Kelly) has finally succeeded in getting Jeff (James Stewart) on-side, prepared to acknowledge the worth of her 'feminine intuition'.

Steven L. DeRosa adds this further information. "Lisa" was composed by Franz Waxman, and the lyrics were written by Harold Rome.

He also notes that the lyrics were mis-quoted last time (we'd in fact copied them in good faith from Robert J. Benton's article, "Film as Dream"). The final line should read: 'If this is dreaming, I hope I never wake. But dream forever, in your arms O Lisa.'

*

Back in 'MacGuffin' 12, reviewing the book 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992) by Theodore Price, I wrote: 'nobody to my knowledge has ever suggested that [the misogynistic playwright August Strindberg] was gay. The two attitudes

aren't synonymous' (p. 5). Well, maybe not. But checking out the very informative 'Gay Book of Days' (1985), by Martin Greif, recently, I noticed that Strindberg's name was listed there as 'suspect' ...

Hitchcock, Sexuality, and the Self

Article by Jason Rasmussen

OSCAR WILDE SAID THAT 'criticism is a mode of autobiography', and the truth of that axiom is manifested by the wide diversity of opinion among film critics/scholars concerning Hitchcock's treatment of homosexuality. Otherwise highly-perceptive people abandon their objectivity when writing about this subject, casually bending Hitchcock's life and work to their own causes and theses. The diagnoses range from Hitchcock as a raving homophobe on the one hand to Hitchcock as a sly, modern-minded gay-rights spokesperson on the other. Critics who subscribe to either of these extreme views are robbing themselves of the complexities of an artist whose ambivalent fears and sympathies with regard to homosexuality show at least as much about the culture to which he responds as they reveal about his personal beliefs and experiences. Almost everyone I've read neglects to distinguish between Hitchcock the human being and the larger 'Hitchcock' - that is, the mythological figure produced by a culturally- and historically-specific series of films and by the sundry forces that shaped that cinematic canon.

If we are to attempt objective analysis of Hitchcock's treatment of queerness, we must constantly remind ourselves that we are viewing these films in 1998 - post-Stonewall, post-AIDS, and post-Ellen DeGeneres. Most of us have been exposed to a wide-range of open discussion on sexual orientation, if not in our own lives, at least in the media and in the legal sphere. But in Hitchcock's era, gay people were usually not talked about, or at best discussed only via monolithic, heterosexist, dehumanizing mythology. We should not reduce our analysis to the rather simplistic question: was Hitchcock homophobic? Rather, we should ask a series of questions, on a film by film basis ... How homophobic was Hollywood in a given year? What techniques were used to present queer people given the restraints of censorship? How did Hitchcock perceive queer people? How did audiences perceive queer people? How does Hitchcock's work compare to its predecessors and its posterity? We should refrain from making moral judgments on Hitchcock the man, and instead focus on learning what his works can show us about the era in which he lived, and how his work shaped the art of moviemaking. Biographical details are by no means insignificant, but we must examine them in their appropriate historical and cultural context.

There is a tendency among critics to either overemphasize or downplay the significance of queerness in Hitchcock's works. Raymond Durgnat's 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock', Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock', and François Truffaut's 'Hitchcock' mention the presence of gay characters without fully examining their significance. Conversely, Theodore Price treats Hitchcock as if sexuality is his only concern: 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' relies almost entirely on stereotypical heterosexist notions to suggest that nearly all the men in the Hitchcock canon can be understood as homosexual if one only knows how to read Price's highly-questionable 'code' - but he doesn't bother to explore how the presentation of these 'gay' individuals fits into Hitchcock's explorations of, for example, the 'failure' of all types of individuals to fulfill societal role-playing games. In his essay "Hitchcock's Homophobia", John Hepworth rightly seeks to identify some of Hitchcock's shortcomings and prejudices about gay men, but completely fails to consider historical or cultural context and easily-accessible evidence that contradicts his central points. In their respective essays "Crisscross" and "The Murderous Gays", Sabrina Barton and Robin Wood both offer well-balanced analyses of Hitchcock's attitudes toward gayness, acknowledging his ignorance and personal anxieties about it, but also showing how his films reveal the nature of the gender role constructions of his era, and examining the effects of Hollywood censorship.

Though Spoto's analysis tends to be over-generous in its portrayal of Hitch's 'gay friendliness', the comprehensive multi-source evidence he gathers in 'The Dark Side of Genius' ultimately captures Hitch's ambivalence and contradictions well: interestingly, Spoto quotes one source as saying that 'Hitchcock was always quite comfortable with homosexual or bisexual people' (96) yet has earlier told us that Hitchcock was 'not even comfortable in the company of women, let alone homosexual men' (75) - referring here to Hitchcock's meeting with the gay director Murnau. Spoto goes on to describe Hitchcock's interaction with gay actors like Ivor Novello and Montgomery Clift, but hardly resolves the above discrepancy. However, there's another rich clue in the book: we're told that Hitchcock, ever fascinated by all forms of social deviance, had a lifelong obsession with the famous - and gay - Oscar Wilde.

Wilde heavily influenced Hitchcock, and Hitchcock was quite conscious of the fact. He sometimes quoted Wilde in interviews, and an examination of his films yields many allusions to Wilde and his work through borrowed dialogue,[1] shared themes, and in at least one case (*Frenzy*, 1972) a direct reference to Wilde. By the time he began his film career,

Hitchcock had an 'intimate' knowledge of Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1891), having read that work 'several times' (Spoto, 'The Dark Side of Genius', 276, 351). In this essay I will examine some parallels between 'Dorian Gray' and *Strangers on a Train* (1951), showing how the works establish gay characters through the use of the doppelganger and by deliberately placing men as object of other men's 'gaze'. I will avoid using simplistic stereotypes to label characters as gay (though Hitchcock may well have believed these to be markers of gayness); instead, I will use concrete evidence contained in the works to show that they can be viewed as examinations of the sexual dynamics between men. I will then address how gayness fits into psychoanalytic themes of alienation, repression, and the instability of public personality.

I hope that examining Hitchcock and Wilde together may show something about the way Hitchcock was fascinated by all forms of deviance from Puritan and Victorian societal norms. In 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (published just four years before the public exposure of Wilde's homosexuality in 1895), Hitchcock found a rich text concerning aestheticism, sexual desire and repression, the nature of the self, and one's relationship to society – a book that fits right into Hitchcock's obsessions. Arthur Laurents describes Hitchcock as a

> *child who's just discovered sex and thinks it's all very naughty ... He might have been indirect in dealing with sexual things in his films, but he had a strong instinct for them. He thought everyone must be doing something physical and nasty behind closed doors - except himself: he withdrew, he wouldn't be part of it.* (Spoto, 'The Dark Side of Genius', 322)

Hitchcock seems to have found it easier to explore other people's repression than to consider his own; significantly, he and Wilde both had an intense desire to separate themselves from their works. Hitchcock 'displayed a cool disinterest' in efforts to find meaning in his work (377), maybe because a critical viewing of his films reveals that they parallel his relationship to his mother (306), his relationships with his wife and daughter (249), his romantic longings (328), and his overuse of alcohol (249). Although Wilde insisted that no conclusions of a personal nature should be drawn from art, he also claimed that 'I mean every word I have said, and everything at which I have hinted in "Dorian Gray"' (Ellman, 321), and pointed out in the book's Preface that 'all art is at once surface and symbol', thus suggesting that the book deals symbolically with such matters as gayness. Both artists were clearly interested in the nature of the self, and produced works concerning the idea of a split personality and suggesting our hidden 'dark side'. Now, Philip Cushman tells us how 'the Victorian self was conceptualized as containing secret, mysterious, and dangerous urges for sex and aggression' (Cushman, 33). The doppelganger is a common vehicle for presenting this idea in the literature of that era. I contend that Hitchcock and Wilde both used the doppelganger to imply concealed homosexuality.

Hitchcock was almost certainly familiar with Freud's concept of 'the id' and Jung's of 'the shadow'. The latter concept is particularly suggestive here. Jung identified in literature the idea of the 'personal shadow' (Jacobi, 109-112), the archetypal 'dark' figure that personifies the psychic features that have been rejected and repressed by another character – in effect, an element of the self that has proved to be intolerable to the conscious ego. In 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', the title character owns a portrait of himself which proves mutable – it grows uglier with each sin he commits, as if it were an extension of himself. In *Strangers on a Train*, Bruno (from the Italian word for 'dark') acts out Guy's murderous urges – he makes a choking gesture as miles away Guy angrily says of his wife 'I could choke her'; Guy says 'I could strangle her', and Bruno proceeds to do just that. Hitchcock pointed out that 'though Bruno has killed Guy's wife, for Guy, it's just as if he had committed the murder himself' (Truffaut, 199). Dorian's hideous portrait is 'the most magical of mirrors' (Wilde, 1995, p. 125), an 'emblem of conscience' that carries the 'burden of his shame' (108), keeping Dorian's crimes secret from the world by growing more ugly with each sin he commits but allowing Dorian himself to stay young and innocent-looking. The word 'shadow' appears 48 times in the text of 'Dorian', or about once every five pages - certainly enough to draw attention to itself. These occurrences coincide with discussions of sin: Wilde's diction reminds us of the contrast and connection between Dorian and his dark double. Hitchcock employs the same technique in *Strangers*. Guy is constantly seen in sunlight, in light-colored clothes, in open spaces and in public performance, where Bruno is seen at night, in his dark mansion, and wearing dark clothes. His boat is aptly named after Pluto, god of the underworld.

'Dorian Gray' describes 'the terrible pleasure of a double life' (201) and suggests that 'each of us has a Heaven and Hell in him' (181). Spoto catalogs a plethora of examples of the 'double' image that permeates *Strangers*: the movie begins by showing two pairs of feet and two sets of train rails that cross twice; when Bruno and Guy meet, Bruno orders a pair of double drinks; the story contains two women with eyeglasses, two women at a party discussing the idea of the perfect crime, two sets of detectives in two cities, two old men at a fair, and two rich and influential fathers; Guy's wife has two boyfriends; Hitchcock makes his cameo carrying a double-bass (Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock', 192). All of this doubling fits with how Bruno is Guy's 'shadow'. Bruno's notion that 'you should do everything before you die' is the perfect foil to Guy's 'watch-and-wait strategy'. It's pretty clear in 'Dorian Gray' that the ugly painting is Dorian's alter

ego; further, Camille Paglia identifies Lord Henry (an ambiguously-close friend of Dorian's) as a second doppelganger in that work (Paglia, 519). Just as Bruno encourages Guy to 'do things' like commit murder, Lord Henry asserts that 'the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it' (102). He claims 'people are afraid of themselves' (28), summing up the central motif in these works - the idea that Guy and Dorian fear the secret, unrealized aspects of themselves represented by their 'shadows'.

We've identified the doppelgangers in both of these works, and we've seen that both Dorian and Guy have a secret 'dark side', but how does that show that they are gay? To understand these characters as gay, we must carefully examine their interaction with others, their dialogue, and the manner in which the artists present them. As Alan Sinfeld has it, 'Dorian Gray' 'invokes the queer image ... despite at no point representing it' (Sinheld, 103). Wilde couldn't very well write about gays in a society that failed to acknowledge even the existence of homosexuality - Jonathan Katz reports that until the mid-1880s even medical professionals did not perceive gays as a distinct category of people (Katz, 209-249). Audience pressure and the Hollywood 'code' forced Hitchcock to be subtle in his presentation of homosexual repression (Russo, 94-99). It is interesting to consider the British version of *Strangers*, which, as described by 'Los Angeles Times' writer Bill Desowitz, features 'a notable amplification of [Robert] Walker's charming flamboyance, psychotic personality and homoerotic attraction to [Farley] Granger' that is toned down in the American release. Similarly, Richard Ellman's biography describes how Wilde cut 'an explicitly homosexual sentence about [Basil] Hallward's affection for Dorian' because he was worried about how his publishers would react (Ellman, 322). The vagueness of the homosexual implications in these works is perhaps appropriate, because, as Sinfeld suggests of 'Dorian Gray', they are not about the 'cunning masking of already known queerness', but about people who have not acknowledged their homosexual desires to themselves (Sinfeld, 103), people who do not quite understand what it is to be queer.

Sabrina Barton describes how the opening scenes of *Strangers on a Train* announce an interest in the dynamic between men by employing, in reverse, Hollywood and Hitchcock conventions for presenting heterosexual interactions. After the credits, the camera scrutinizes the men's legs, and offers no one's glance to justify the leg fixation. These scenes show Hitchcock's characteristic cross-cutting which emphasizes both our doppelganger theme and the (potential) doubling of desire between these men. The suggestive dialogue - 'I like you - I'd do anything for you' - makes Bruno's affection clear, and the film's Freudian concern with the slippage of male identity intimates that Bruno represents a projection of Guy's own nature. Barton points out that Bruno is always in the place Guy is going to be soon (train stations, tennis courts, the party, the amusement park). She also presents a chart of cinematic codes to show how, in the strict, regular alternation of shots that present the two men, the camera alternates between the two in 58 of the first 67 shots - they represent one character who is doubled or split like the parting train tracks that begin the scene.

Camille Paglia identifies how Wilde describes men as objects to be watched in order to present homosexual desire. Basil is 'dominated, soul brain and power' by seeing Dorian's masculine beauty, so fascinated that he could be 'absorbed' (140) by him. The doppelganger painting makes Dorian's object-status literal.

As object of Bruno's desire, Guy plays the 'blonde-function' of Hitchcock's other films (we may note that the blonde is noticably absent in this film). The movement of the sequence implies that their meeting is inevitable - much like the shot/reverse pattern of a Bacall/Bogie pairing announces Bacall's 'femininity' and Bogart's 'masculinity' through contrast - and makes their meeting the greatest interest of the audience (Barton, 217-228). The interaction between Ann Morton and Guy is rather lifeless and doesn't hold our interest. When Bruno commits the murder, and when Barbara Morton exclaims how wonderful it would be to have someone 'who loves you so much he'll kill for you', these words intended to describe Guy's love for Ann take on an irony in that Bruno actualizes them in his devotion to Guy. According to Bruno's accusation ('pretty smart, marrying the boss's daughter') and Guy's silent reaction, Guy is interested in Ann primarily because of the public appearance she helps him to maintain. Dorian Gray is in love with the actress Sibyl Vane only while she is on stage wearing boy's clothes. By having Dorian fall out of love with her when she stops performing, Wilde suggests Dorian's heterosexual love is an act.[2] Dorian says Sibyl has 'killed his love' (103), surely revealing that he was never in love with her in the first place, but only with her stage personae and the fake world she helped him maintain. One can't help but think of Guy 's relationship to Ann: just as Dorian is in love with the world of theatre acting, Guy is in love with the acting inherent to politics. Both Dorian and Guy are eager to stay out of other people's gossip because they need to preserve their public personae. Guy works in Senator Morton's office, and we learn that Morton is influential enough to have the detectives 'recalled immediately' if he should request it. By using Ann Morton as a means of political ascension, Guy demonstrates a willingness to utilize marriage as a tool for gaining popular acceptance. By having Guy's 'shadow' point this out, and by making it clear that Guy would be happy to have Bruno kill his first wife (through repeated outbursts on Guy's part, saying things like 'I could strangle her'), Hitchcock implies that Guy is homosexual.[3]

If Ann and Bruno's worlds represent alternate possible manifestations of Guy's personality, Hitchcock's film reveals much about the volatile nature of sexual identity. During the final race-against-time tennis match - the ultimate battle between Guy's personae - the 'treat those two imposters just the same' quote from Kipling's 'If' (seen above the court-entrance) points to Hitchcock's concern with the social construction of masculinity. (In the poem, its narrator foresees a series of obstacles that a youth must overcome, and tells him that if he does so, 'then you'll be a man'). By playing out the film's battle under this quote about sameness, Hitchcock may be alluding in part to Freud's notion of innate constitutional bisexuality. Note that Bruno represents many of Freud's stereotypes about the causes of homosexuality - he hates his father, is excessively devoted to his mother (whose inept abstract painting of a male figure distorts her husband's masculinity), and hasn't completed the Oedipal cycle (compare Freud, 43-49).

Robert J. Corber's 'In the Name of National Security' examines these Freudian ideas about homosexuality and suggests that Hitchcock used them to present the sense of danger that gay men posed to their heterosexual counterparts - Corber argues that the idea of fluid sexuality made gays American 'national security risks' who might prevent people like Guy from obtained fixed, 'masculine', heterosexual identities (Corber, 14). The idea that Bruno might be a threat to a traditional image of masculinity is emphasized when he pops the balloon of the boy dressed up as a cowboy - the cowboy being the quintessential image of American masculinity. The movement of the film is the destabilization and reconstruction of masculinity (but only after Bruno has died with a broken neck). Watching this lamentable process shows us the dangerous sexism and homophobia inherent in maintaining masculine identity. The film offers a rare 1950s look at subjectivity outside the exclusive realm of the heterosexual male. By placing men as objects of study, the film gives us an insight into the way gender roles are constructed and function in society.

The depiction of the homosexual as deranged killer is a problematic aspect of these works that cannot be ignored: it is typical of modern film and literature to depict gay men as unhappy, unstable, and dangerous (Russo, 94), and it would be easy to write off Hitchcock's work as a typical piece of heterosexist bigotry. Hitchcock had previously made a connection between homosexuality, fascism, and murder in *Rope* (1948). But we must assess the value of these works in historical context. One could argue that Hitchcock's work - most notably his film *Psycho* (1960) - is essential to the liberation of cinema that occured after the 1960s. Wilde's murderous Dorian fits the historical pattern that shows dangerous gay men who threaten to 'convert' their straight counterparts. But does the association of gay desire and murderous urges mean that these works are saying that all gay people are murderers, or does it simply imply that we all have murderous urges that we hide, and that we all are subject to certain sexual desires that we suppress? And if these works do associate homosexuality with being psychotic, can't we read that as an indictment of the effects of homophobia and repression, rather than as an innate apect of homosexuality? Guy's winning an acceptable social identity depends upon his playing out homophobic, murderous, and sexist games - that is as much a critique of heterosexism as it is of homosexuality. It would be a gross distortion to say that Hitchcock's goal was simply to show that gay people are dangerous. Hitchcock was probably no more interested in depicting gays than he was any other so-called 'marginal' societal group.[4] Hitchcock's interest in homosexuality was not to make a comment on gayness, but rather to show something about the nature of personality and sexuality - the idea that chaos lurks beneath the illusion of order and stability that we constantly take for granted. *Strangers on a Train* is about Guy - our everyman-figure - not a film about gay men. Homosexuality is not the subject of this film.

Strangers on a Train and its likely influence, 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', enrich our understanding of ourselves by encouraging us to examine our identities. Like most of us, Hitchcock was not immune from the thinking of the heterosexist culture in which he lived, nor was he free from prejudice and homophobia. He bought into conventional stereotypes about what it is to be gay, and he likened homosexual desires to murderous urges. But unlike the work of most of the other filmmakers of his era, his films offer an examination of human nature that questions the rigid sexual and gender constructions of our society, and move beyond Victorianism. Hitchcock demands that we face ourselves and discover our true natures.

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Notes

1. Editor's note. A case in point is *Under Capricorn* (1949), where Adare's scepticism about 'society' in early Australia ('Is there any?') seems to echo a remark of Mrs Vane in Chapter Five of 'Dorian Gray' ('I believe there is no society of any kind in the Colonies, nothing that I would call society').
2. Editor's note. Camile Paglia cites a perhaps not dissimilar case. Noting that bisexual author Virginia Woolf wrote 'Orlando' (1928) with fellow-author Victoria Sackville-West in mind, she claims that the novel's fictive energy comes from Woolf's imagining Sackville-West as a man. 'When, halfway through, Orlando turns into a woman - that is, when Vita becomes simply herself - the life goes out of the book.' (Paglia, 'Sexual Personae', Chapter 17)

3. Editor's note. Of course, 'strangling' is ambiguous here, having erotic associations as well as deathly ones. But Theodore Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', is someone else who seems to have few doubts that Guy is really a homosexual. See Price, Chapter 1.
4. Editor's note. Yes! Think, for instance, of the chorus girls in *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), the boxing troupe in *The Ring* (1927), the circus freaks in *Saboteur* (1942), etc.

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The other Hitchcock journal

As we hope most of our readers already know, besides 'The MacGuffin' there's the 'Hitchcock Annual', a quality publication whose 1997-98 issue runs to nearly 200 pages. Its main content this time is drawn from papers originally given at the Austin Hitchcock Conference in 1996. We particularly like in this issue David Sterritt's very readable "Alfred Hitchcock's Registrar of Births and Deaths" (on *Family Plot*, 1976) and Richard Allen's "Avian Metaphor in *The Birds*" (a very thorough study of the 'meaning' of the bird imagery in Hitchcock's 1963 film). Subscription rates (US currency) are: individuals $10, institutions $12. Foreign rates: add $3. Send a cheque or money-order to 'Hitchcock Annual', P.O. Box 2568, New London, NH 03257, USA.

OUR BASIC OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION RATE is $22 Aust. ($18 US) for 4 air-posted issues every 12-15 months. For 4 surface-mailed copies, the rate is $16 Aust. ($14 US). Make drafts, etc. payable to 'The MacGuffin'. AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIBERS please pay $16 for 4 issues. THE BASIC OVERSEAS BACK-ISSUE RATE is $6 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (1-3 copies). Otherwise, $5 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (4 or more copies), $4 (Aust. or US) per surface-mailed copy (at least 4 copies please). BACK-ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA are $5 each. Some past 'MacGuffins' have featured *Rear Window* (issue 23), *Rich and Strange* (22), *The Trouble With Harry* (21), *The Wrong Man* (20), *Vertigo* (17, 11, 1), *Foreign Correspondent* (16), *Spellbound* (15), Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14), *Young and Innocent* (13), *The Paradine Case* (12), *Notorious* (10), *The Lady Vanishes* (9), and *Torn Curtain* (8). These are the issues most recommended. Write or email for more information, or refer to our Web site (address below). NB: issues 18 and 19 are permanently out-of-print.

ODD SPOT: CRACK!

Fly a kite on the Internet and see whether lightning strikes ... It did for me last year when I asked for information about the line from a children's game heard in Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), 'Step on a crack and break your mother's back!'

Among the things I learnt ... The saying is familiar to many present-day Americans from when they were kids. Also, it's heard many times in books, movies, etc. It's spoken by Mary Katherine in 'We Have Always Lived in the Castle', the popular late novel by New England writer Shirley Jackson (1919-1965), who was best known for her ghost story, 'The Haunting of Hill House'. The well-known rock group DEVO included the saying in their 1980 single, "Whip It".

One person even sent me a wonderful short rumination about cruelty in children's games. An extract: '[Not fearing] to 'step on a crack' may be a psychic 'rite of passage' showing that a child doesn't fear separation or loss of the mother - he's all grown up! Not heeding this taunt is also a signal the child probably gives that he is now fully rational, has reached the age of reason.'

(Thanks to: Angelique Skiman, Robert Guttke, Dan Kenneally.)

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 25 August 1998 ISSN 1035-9001 $US 5

EDITORIAL

I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT OF beginning the Editorial last time with a quote from *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), 'You're tearing me apart!' Now, one issue later, here I am doing exactly that! Quoting James Dean, I mean. And still quite seriously. The fact is, I increasingly find two sets of our readers vying with each other - and with me - to determine what sort of film analysis and general content we should run in these pages. Should it be ruthlessly 'faultless', and encrypted in an academic idiom, as if it were camera-ready copy for a journal overseen by a board of professors? Or should it have a more informal style that may seem more 'natural' but does permit, let's face it, occasional sloppy thinking?

Of course, the above is a simplification. Yet I believe it's fair to the spirit of what I want to say. I remember that when 'The MacGuffin' began in late 1990, as a Mensa SIG newsletter (which it supposedly still is), the main model was another SIG newsletter - that of a books group in the US - none of whose articles exceeded a few paragraphs and whose editorial might typically be about what bulbs the editor had lately planted in her garden or what type of scones she'd baked that morning. All quite chatty and nothing too elevated or arty, you understand.

Well, 'The MacGuffin' has always aimed to be a bit more than a chat-group publication. Nonetheless, I've tried to keep a certain informality about it, as befits a 'newsletter', and as a way (I'd hoped) of staying honest and not being stuffy. Maybe that shows the wary Aussie in me, but also it pays tribute to Hitch - among the least stuffy of filmmakers! So I felt hurt when, in recent times, along have come academics and others who've looked at some of our earlier issues and said, in effect, well of course you're not sophisticated or up to our own high standards of impeccable Hitchcock scholarship!

But equally, I felt hurt when after our recent *Rear Window* issue, a large number of subscriptions weren't renewed. I thought - brooded? - about that, and consoled myself as follows. Those people had just received four of our best issues! Number 20 on *The Wrong Man*, number 21 on *The Trouble With Harry*, number 22 on *Rich and Strange*, and number 23 on *Rear Window*, were each praised by some leading professional and/or academic film writers. (On the other hand, our readers' issue last time, number 24, has noticeably been given the silent treatment by our academic subscribers.)

Here's what I've decided. On the whole, the academics have been right! However much I detest the irrelevance and narrowness of some academic film writing, those very academics are better able than most to spot where a writer has inadequately grasped his subject - and to hold him to account! When I wrote on *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 11, there were several weak spots; it was those passages that seemed to glare at me when I came to rewrite the article the other day. The article was always meant to be revised at some stage, but that was now no help to me at all. 'The MacGuffin' had already been judged on what it actually said, and had been found wanting.

The rewritten *Vertigo* article appears in this issue. I've added after it a critique, pointing out that I'm aware that the article still has shortcomings - not least, the fact that much more could be said about Hitchcock's 'sources'. Just tonight I've watched on TV a 1943 B-picture, Edward Dmytryk's *The Falcon Strikes Back*, which contains one more instance (cf. *North by Northwest*) of the scene where a man returns next day to the place where he'd been abducted and is met with denials that it ever happened. How many times have variants of that scene been used in film and fiction? Certainly many more times than my article, which speculates on the topic, indicates.

But before I list the main content of our new issue, here are two further points. First, please note that the availability of back-issues is henceforth restricted to issue 20 and above. The only exceptions that I'll allow to this rule are where specific research requests are involved. For example, if someone is reseaching *Spellbound*, I'll be happy to supply a copy of our issue 15, on that film. Second, 'The MacGuffin' will continue to be written in as concrete a style, using

minimal jargon, as I can manage - and will still critique in book-reviews, etc., the more pretentious or inadequate writing on Hitchcock when we meet it!

* * *

As indicated, the main article this time is a revised version of the piece on *Vertigo*'s 'sources' that originally appeared in 'MacGuffin' 11. A new book, Dan Auiler's '*Vertigo*: The Making of a Hitchcock Clasic' (there's a favourable review on our Web site), actually said some nice things about the article! For the revision, I've added passages such as one referring to the likely influence on *Vertigo* of the British film *Corridor of Mirrors*.

Auiler's book is one of several that we'll try to review fully in our next issue. Another, of course, is Camille Paglia's BFI monograph on *The Birds* - which, as I've said on the Web, fully vindicates our past claims that the writer of 'Sexual Personae' should turn her hand to Hitchcock! (We suspect that more writing by Paglia on Hitchcock will be forthcoming.) Meanwhile, I'll try to squeeze into the present issue some of my recent jottings from the Web about Paglia.

The actual book-review this time is long, and is devoted to just one book: Robert Samuels's 'Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality'. Such a review illustrates the sort of pressures I began this Editorial by mentioning. Because it's a 'difficult' book, I've chosen to write what is perhaps more of a synopsis than a review. If 'The MacGuffin' were strictly an academic publication, my approach would doubtless have been different. (But reader J. Lary Kuhns has his own, quite valid criticism of the book - see our 'Letters' page.)

Also reviewed this issue (finally!) is 'The *Rebecca* Project' released on CD-ROM. Apologies to Charles Silet for our accidental omission of his review last time. He has lately reviewed the Project elsewhere at slightly greater length. Those interested should consult 'Film Criticism', Spring 1998, pp. 60-64.

We heartily thank our various letter-writers. Note in particular Dr Greg Garrett's exciting letter about the planning for the Hitchcock Centennial next year.

There will be another 'MacGuffin' later this year, probably on *Under Capricorn* (1949) and/or the 1956 version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. A table of contents for issues 20-24 will also be included next time.

To everyone, good viewing - Ken.

LETTERS

The Lady Vanishes
J. Lary Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

Sorry Ken, but upon glancing through Robert Samuel's 'Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality' it appeared to me - since I did not see a meaningful sentence - basically just incomprehesible drivel! I did see one paragraph that was meaningful in the sense that it could be verified as true or false - the slur on the masculinity of Caldicott and Charters, supported only by the assertion that they were in bed together sans pants. But to anyone who has seen *The Lady Vanishes* it is clear that one is wearing the pajama top and the other the bottom.

So here we have another case of a self-styled Hitchcock 'scholar' who apparently has not bothered to study the movies he writes about. For if Samuels had studied the movie, he would have noted that the following dialogue describes unambiguously the characters' sexuality. Upon being told they could have the servant girl's room and being introduced to her, Caldicott says, 'Pity we can't have one each' - pause for Charters's 'What?' - 'room, I mean.' Here the character reveals through humor his desire for a female, but he is unable to express this openly, even to his friend because of their social class (*vide* Freud's 'Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious'). He then declares a preference for separate quarters, to which Charters accedes.

This scene thus shows that the two gentlemen are clearly heterosexual, and evidently respectable married men (possibly on a business trip). For, were they bachelors, they would speak more openly about the girl; but our characters do not, since it would show a disrespect for their wives. They must mask their feelings through humor.

* * *

Hitchcock centennial

Greg Garrett, Baylor University, Texas, USA

Here is the latest info on the centennial events, which I notice you have already devoted some Web space to discussing. One caveat: plans are subject to change.

First, Hitch's birthday will be commemorated next *August 11-13* in Hollywood with a three-day Hitchcock 100 Celebration tentatively hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and sponsored by American Movie Classics, the Writers Guild of America, and the Hitchcock Centennial Project, which is housed at Baylor. We're currently discussing guests and program with the Academy and nothing has been finalized, but I'm hoping to show *North by Northwest* and involve Lehman and Eva Marie Saint; other names floated for the program so far include Bogdanovich, Spielberg, DePalma, Leigh, Hedren. This event will be geared primarily to a general and industry audience, although there will be a scholarly component where several major critics (perhaps Leff, Sterritt, Ebert) will address Hitchcock's work and continuing influence.

Web site: <http://www.baylor.edu/~Hitchcock/Hitch.html>.

October 13-17. Richard Allen is coordinating Hitchcock: A Centennial Celebration in New York. Sam Gonzales, Walter Raubicheck, and I make up the rest of the coordinating committee. This will be a conference/symposium featuring scholarly papers, panels, appearances by many of Hitchcock's associates, and - we hope - a showing of the restored *Rear Window*. Since Richard is in charge of this event I don't have even a tentative list of sponsors, but in addition to NYU, Pace University, and Baylor, I expect it will include the AFI, the Writers Guild, and others. Pat Hitchcock and Lew Wasserman have announced plans to attend, and we expect many other figures - from Samuel Taylor to Robin Wood to Martin Scorsese - to be involved. This will be an event which involves virtually every major Hitchcock critic of the past three decades as well as many of Hitchcock's contemporaries and products of his influence. Richard Allen and I are also discussing including a component intended for a more general audience in which great teachers 'teach' aspects/films of Hitchcock to high school students or members of the community. If any of your readers has suggestions about this aspect of the conference, I'd encourage them to contact me at <Greg_Garrett@baylor.edu>; I'd be interested in hearing suggestions for possible participants, formats, subjects to be covered in this proposed area.

Deadline for 500-word abstracts of papers on any aspect of Hitchcock studies for presentation at the conference is February 1, 1999. They should be sent to: Hitchcock Conference, Dept of Cinema Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, 721 Broadway, New York, NY 10003, marked attn: Sam Gonzales.

Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/tisch/cinema/hitchcock>.

* * *

Vertigo

John Sheridan, Oakland, California, USA

Has anyone ever written on the correspondences between the 1947 Bacall/Bogart *Dark Passage* and Hitch's *Vertigo*? There are so many parallels as to be almost dizzying! My girlfriend and I began making a list of the scenes in *Dark Passage*:

1. The shots under the Golden Gate Bridge, near Fort Point.
2. Other shots of San Francisco: Bay Bridge, Coit Tower, downtown, skylines, rooftops.
3. Both Bogey and Scottie run over SF rooftops, using the metal railings to go from one part of a roof to another.
4. Bogey is made a fall-guy.
5. He has to 'recover' for a period of time, in his case after plastic surgery.
6. His surgeon's face during the anaesthesia looks 'vertiginous' (cf. the animated sequence of Scottie's nervous breakdown).
7. Bacall, like Midge, is a painter who also does sketches.
8. Bacall, like Midge, nurses the injured leading man back to health.
9. The falling out of the window by Agnes Moorhead.
10. The falling death of the crook near the GG Bridge (near where Madeleine 'falls' into the bay).
11. Agnes Moorhead's name in the film is Madge (cf. Midge).

12. At one point, Bogey has to run down a number of fire-escape stairs (cf. the dizzying stairs in *Vertigo*).
13. Bogey, in the earlier *Maltese Falcon*, had played a SF private eye who tails a mystery person under misleading circumstances, as does Scottie ...

[Editor's note. We remarked, without enumerating, resemblances between Delmer Daves's *Dark Passage* and Hitchcock's *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 1. The above list is very welcome. Thanks, John.]

* * *

Ross Campbell, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I have been researching reasons as to why the 70mm restoration of *Vertigo* looks so cold and lifeless in its colour, compared to the warm, fully saturated colour of the Technicolor original. I have seen similar results when the Technicolor print is projected on modern equipment that utilises xenon arc lamps, as distinct from carbon arc illumination that prevailed up until the 1970s. I'm currently having conversations with technicians in Melbourne to determine if there is a substantial difference in colour temperature between the two systems. When, or if, I receive more information I'll let you know!

* * *

Information/texts wanted

Carlos A. Altgelt, 25734 Hopkins Street, Dearborn Heights, MI 48125, USA (phone 313 317 9264; email <thuergo@aol.com>)

Gentlemen: I'm interested in the following plays and novels. Independent of condition, I'd like to read them, not collect them.

Plays:

Paul Anthelme, 'Nos Deux Consciences' ('Our Two Consciences'); Charles Bennett, 'Blackmail'; Guy Bolton, 'Waltzes from Vienna'; John Colton and Margaret Linden, 'Under Capricorn'; Campbell Dixon, 'Secret Agent'; Jefferson Farjeon, 'Number Seventeen'; David Lestrange (Ivor Novello and Constance Collier), 'Downhill'.

Novels:

Maxwell Anderson, 'The True Story of Christopher Emmanuel Balestrero' (non-fiction); Norman Krasna, 'Mr and Mrs Smith' (probably from collected stories); Gordon McDonnell, 'Shadow of a Doubt' (from collected stories?); Oliver Sandys, 'The Pleasure Garden'.

[Editor's note. The Bennett work is *surely* in the library of the British Museum! We're told, by Charles Barr, that the Sandys novel is certainly there. Further comments, anyone?]

CD-ROM Review

Rabinovitz, Lauren, and Greg Easley: 'The *Rebecca* Project'. CD-ROM for Macintosh computers only. With additional programming by Robert McBurney. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995. $69.95 (US).

Review by Charles L.P. Silet

'The *Rebecca* Project' is an enhanced computer text which provides both written material - biographies, historical information, and analysis - and various forms of illustration: studio stills, photographs of pressbook items, newspaper clippings, book jackets, and actual clips from not only *Rebecca* (1940) but also from other Hitchcock films, screen tests, and even a panoramic shot of the Cornwall coast. In the process, the editors have used computer technology to indicate how film study can be revolutionised. As a concept, 'The *Rebecca* Project' offers an exciting look into the future of film scholarship; in its execution, it suggests that much work still needs to be done.

Most innovative uses of technology may seem at first rather clumsy and unsophisticated, and in this regard 'The *Rebecca* Project' is no exception. There are annoying glitches in the program which slice off the last lines of the written texts and garble the bibliographic entries. Portions of the CD-ROM seem to be included simply for visual effect and contain very little or no commentary. The critical essays sometimes appear overly cut or are sketchy in the presentation of analysis and information.

'The *Rebecca* Project' is divided into six sections: Authorship, Feminist Approaches, Genre, Production, Screening Room, and Marketing & Publicity. Except for Screening Room, each section has a bibliography for further readings. The various sections contain materials which when taken as a whole provide a general background for understanding the multiple forces, historical and aesthetic, that helped to shape Hitchcock's classic film.

The Authorship section provides short biographies of Daphne du Maurier, David O. Selznick, and Hitchcock, and each of the biographies includes not only a brief overview of the subject's life but also some discussion of his/her work, its basic themes and approaches. They are also accompanied by lots of visual material. For example, when du Maurier's residence in Cornwall is being discussed, there are shots of the coastline and of 'Menabilly', du Maurier's home which became the model for 'Manderley' in her novel called 'Rebecca'.

The section on Feminist Approaches contains essays by Diana Waldman, Tania Modleski, Mary Ann Doan, and Rhona J. Berenstein which present various gender issues in the film, and collectively they provide a fairly comprehensive reading of *Rebecca* along feminist lines. Again, each essay is accompanied by film clips which illustrate the points being made in the analysis.

The Genre portion contains an outline of contemporary notions of the Gothic Romance, and there are also a series of stills of book covers from modern Gothic novels including several from various editions of du Maurier's 'Rebecca' as well as cover art from books by Mary Stewart, Victoria Holt, and Phillis A. Whitney. Each of these illustrations shows the entire cover, but there is also a close-up feature which allows the user to see in more detail a portion of the art work.

The section on Production offers a history of the film by Lauren Rabinovitz. Besides the usual chronological sequence of the events in the making of the film, there are such features as portions of the screen tests for the central role by Vivien Leigh and Anne Baxter as well as Joan Fontaine. There is loads of important detail here which is genuinely insightful about the various ways the studio influenced the final version of the film. Screening Room contains a separate listing of all the film clips, over eighty in all, arranged in alphabetical order by title. This section allows the user to scan through them without having to go back into the individual sections. Finally, Marketing & Publicity provides information on the 1940 advertising campaign, the revised trailer which was used when the film was played after its initial release, materials from the pressbook sent to exhibitors, and a selection of the film's publicity stills.

In sum, 'The *Rebecca* Project' provides a fairly thorough examination of the various elements involved in the making and promoting of the film. It offers a tantalising look into the ways computer technologies can be used to change future film scholarship when, for instance, articles can actually use moving, and talking, examples from the film itself. The interactive nature of the computer also allows the reader to move around among the various sections of the 'Project', so that its component parts can be linked together. The 'close-up' feature, used in several of the visuals, allows the reader to see a smaller portion in greater detail, and so provides an additional analytical tool.

Unfortunately, as I say, there are some annoying glitches in the applications within the 'Project'. Too many of the written texts have their final lines cropped, and when the text is provided with markers for textual interaction, they are often superimposed over words in the text. The formatting of the bibliographic entries is also a mess with the titles spread over two or three lines, leaving large blanks and the entries seem to tumble down the screen. Furthermore, the written text of 'The *Rebecca* Project' appears skimpy, and many of the clips are under-analysed. Also, the exclusively 'feminist' reading of the film may strike some as unnecessarily narrow. Then, too, there are the parts which appear merely tacked on like the book covers of paperback versions of contemporary gothic novels which are never discussed.

While the editors and programmers of 'The *Rebecca* Project' should be praised for producing such a ground-breaking text, it remains to work out more fully and in better detail, the implications of their ideas. Yet the prospects for such computer-enhanced film study are truly extraordinary, suggesting enlarged possibilities for the ways film criticism will be written in the future.

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Best films of 1997

Here are three 'ten best' lists of films screened in Australia last year, compiled by three top film critics, all of them male (but who, we're sure, have tried not to be sexist). The critics are Evan Williams, Tom Ryan, and Adrian Martin. Thanks, guys.

Surprisingly, just three films received more than one vote. They were the genuinely moving *Breaking the Waves* (Denmark) and *The Ice Storm* (USA), and *Gabbeh* (Iran) which Adrian Martin described as 'wonderful, soulful, energetic and affecting'.

Evan Williams appended a note to his list, as follows. 'I was tempted to include *Titanic* on the grounds of special effects alone, but thought better of it. *Hamlet* is included *pour encourage les autres* - full-length Shakespeare treatments, even silly ones, deserve some recognition!'

Evan's list

1. L.A. Confidential (Curtis Hanson, USA)
2. Breaking the Waves (Lars Von Trier, Denmark)
3. Lone Star (John Sayles, USA)
4. The Ice Storm (Ang Lee, USA)
5. The Portrait of a Lady (Jane Campion, USA)
6. Pretty Villages, Pretty Flames (S. Dragojevic)
7. Trees Lounge (Steve Buscemi, USA)
8. Mother (Albert Brooks, USA)
9. Kiss or Kill (Bill Bennett, Australia)
10. Hamlet (Kenneth Branagh, UK)

Tom's list

1. Breaking the Waves
2. The Quiet Room (Rolf De Heer, Australia)
3. Exile in Sarajevo (Tahir Cambis, Alma Sahbaz, Australia)
4. A Summer's Tale Eric Rohmer, France)
5. The Truce (Francesco Rosi, Italy)
6. Gabbeh (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iran)
7. The Ice Storm
8. My Best Friend's Wedding (P.J. Hogan, USA)
9. L'Appartement (Gilles Mimouni, France)
10. Jerry Maguire Cameron Crowe, USA)

Adrian's list

1. Vertigo (newly-restored version) (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1958)/ Days of Heaven (Terrence Malick, USA, 1978)
2. Gabbeh
3. Crash (David Cronenberg, Canada)
4. Libera Me (Alain Cavalier, France, 1993)/ La Promesse (Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Belgium)
5. The Bride With White Hair (Ronny Yu, Hong Kong, 1993)
6. Lost Highway (David Lynch, USA)/ Three Lives and Only One Death (Raul Ruiz, France)
7. Fallen Angels (Wong Kar-Wai, Hong Kong, 1995)/ Happy Together (same director)
8. Pitfall (Andre de Toth, USA, 1948)
9. Irma Vep (Olivier Assayas, France)/ Love's Debris (Werner Schroeter, France)
10. Happy-End (Peter Tscherkassky, Austria, 1996)/ Guys and Dolls (Joseph Mankiewicz, USA, 1955)

BOOK REVIEW

Samuels, Robert: 'Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality: Lacan, Feminisms, and Queer Theory' (State University of New York Press, 1998; 166 pp; pb)

> *Reality is something none of us can stand, at any time.*
> - Alfred Hitchcock[1]

There's an entry in 'The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought' that offers a definition of the Lacanian term 'desire'. It says that 'desire is intrinsically unfulfillable, because it is desire for something else which is always missing in us. It is desire for the Other (mother, for example) who will never fill our own lack of being, however hard she might try, but it is also desire of [by? from?] the Other, as all we find in this Other is his or her desire, by which we are captured.'

If, gentle reader, you negotiated the above without stumbling, my guess is that you're probably already well acquainted with Jacques Lacan and all his works (well, the gist of them!). In which case, I'd say you're favourably placed to extract the most benefit from Robert Samuels's 'Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality', which I judge to be a worthwhile book though not one for beginners, either in matters Hitchcock or Lacan.

The book makes a lot of sense, after a fashion. Lacanians should enjoy it, for they will probably take to its tendentious style and content like the proverbial duck to water. Talk about the desire of the Other capturing us! Once inducted into the works of Lacan and his kind - by Slavoj Zizek, say - many readers typically cry 'more!' And not too critically, it seems to me. Samuels himself quotes Zizek often, though seldom does he challenge his judgements.

Thus even though Samuels's chapter on *The Birds* (1963) initially seems to have reservations about Zizek's understanding of what the birds represent, it ends up by saying that Zizek in fact has seen more deeply than we have supposed. Zizek, we're told, 'argues that "the birds do not 'signify' the maternal [Mrs Brenner's] super-ego, they do not 'symbolize' [Mitch and Melanie's] blocked sexual relations, ... and so on'. Rather, 'the birds "are ... the making present in the real, the objectivization, the incarnation of the fact that, on the symbolizing level, something 'has not worked out'..."'.' (p. 126)

Has this anything to do with desire for/of the Other? Yes, it does. Desire is as basic to Lacan's system of psychoanalysis as 'Will' is to Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy - though I'd say that the latter subsumes Lacan's system just as Will itself subsumes psychoanalysis (and everything else). Which is one reason why I believe Schopenhauer is finally more relevant than Lacan to an overall understanding of Hitchcock's films ...

These are matters to come back to. My main purpose in this review is to explain exactly why the birds in *The Birds* represent what Zizek calls 'a failed symbolization', and why Samuels can gloss this by saying that the birds effectively make 'present in the Real a lack in the Symbolic order' (p. 127). To facilitate my explanation, I'll first summarise the thesis of Samuels's book, and then try to set down briefly his main ideas about the eight or nine films to which the book devotes individual chapters. My criticisms of the book should emerge along the way.

'Lacan', says Samuels, 'argues that we negate the Real by representing it and that this act of Symbolic destruction or murder is at the root of all our unconscious guilt' (p. 1). One way to begin to understand this remark is to remember what Schopenhauer told us long ago: that our culture consists of one vast series of representations, but that this Representation is never the Will itself - which is effectively everywhere and nowhere (and infinitely extended). Lacan's term, the Symbolic, refers of course to the set of pre-existing cultural structures into which the child is born (e.g., kindred relations, language), while the Real is essentially that which is excluded from the Symbolic - and hence, says Lacan, impossible to know.

In an obvious echo of Kant, Lacan tells us that the child's acquisition of language is what negates or murders the original natural Thing (cf. Kant's Thing-in-itself, which Schopenhauer equated with Will). Samuels notes (p. 6) that this carries strong echoes of the Garden of Eden myth; and I'm reminded of a perceptive remark of Orson Welles, that the main theme of Western art is the search for a lost paradise. Such a theme is consistently found in Hitchcock's films, starting with his first feature, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925).

Next, Lacan follows Freud in arguing that one can never refind the original thing that one seeks; frustratingly, one can only find the *absence* of the Thing (p. 7). This introduces that crucial Lacanian concept, the object (a). The object (a) serves to remind the individual subject of the loss of the Thing. When language originally 'swallowed' the Real, there was a tell-tale residue rather like Adam's apple that stuck in his throat. In short, the object (a) is a rem(a)inder of the Real that could not 'be swallowed in the throat of the Symbolic' (p. 8). Here for some reason I think of Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964). Mark Rutland says that he has nothing left of his wife, only an artifact that had once *belonged to* his wife. That artifact, then, is no object (a) ...

The object (a) resists what Lacan calls the death drive, the working of the Symbolic whose signifying structures operate regardless of the contingencies of human activity and are thus in a sense 'beyond' life. And as already noted, because at some level we're aware of how we murder the Real by Symbolising it, we feel guilt. Indeed Samuels says that our original sin is repeated every time that we speak or articulate something in a Symbolic form (p. 8).

There's another crucial matter. In Lacanian theory, the object (a) is what you offer/become as a response to the desire of the Other, and thus it functions as the cause/stimulus of desire. In Hitchcock's films, as in most classical narratives, typically a woman plays the role of the lost object that causes/stimulates (a man's) desire. Moreover, '[s]ince desire is always a desire for something that one doesn't have, the key to the feminine object will be the presentation of a form of absence.' (p. 8) How the woman presents herself to the subject is all-determining. If she too closely resembles the lost Mother, there's bound to be trouble. For we inhabit a patriarchal culture ruled by the Symbolic 'law of the father', i.e., the incest taboo. In such a culture, the original desire for the mother is forced into the subject's unconscious (p. 7).

Nonetheless, there the Mother then remains. Samuels quotes Julia Kristeva on why masculine desire represses the mother's creative role: 'Fear of the archaic mother [is] essentially fear of her generative power. It is this power, a dreaded one, that patrilineal filiation has the burden of subduing.' (p. 21) Kristeva here effectively refers to what Camille Paglia calls the Great Mother - whose presence, as well as absence, I believe to be felt in many of the best Hitchcock films ...

* * *

Why is *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) so-called? Samuels has a ready answer. The 'motherly' Miss Froy 'vanishes because she has no place in the male-directed discourse of film representation, just as the [original] subject vanishes beneath the power of language and the desire of the Other' (p. 19). And Iris Henderson? 'Iris', says Samuels, 'plays the role of the female who refuses to give up her initial relation with the maternal order. All of the men on the train continuously attempt to get her to stop her search for her lost object, Miss Froy, but she resists.' (p. 24) Simple!

Matters become more complicated when Samuels turns to *Spellbound* (1945). I find this chapter to be the least satisfying of the book, but it does establish some essential Lacanian ideas that have evident relevance to Hitchcock's work. Notably, Samuels describes one variant of female presentation in which the feminine form becomes split between being an object of horror to the male, the so-called 'debased' object (a), and an object of desired completeness and fulfilment (p. 29). The concept of woman as horrifying has gained greater understanding since the publication of Kristeva's 'Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection' in 1980. Samuels shows convincingly in his chapter on *Marnie* that Marnie herself has taken on such an abject role. But in *Spellbound*, how Ballantine sees Constance is essentially 'all in his (own) mind'.

Unfortunately, what Samuels asserts about *Spellbound* never seems to quite square with the film itself. Hitchcock clearly had his own (classically) Freudian agenda during its making, and Samuels's Lacanian (and Derridian) interpretation placed on top of - or alongside - Hitchcock's material just won't engage or stick. Revealingly, the description of the dream is very tentative: 'I would like to read this image as ... We can read this as ... this could refer to ... The broken wheel then represents ... Perhaps we can read this dream symbol as ... This might indicate ...'. (p. 37)[2]

The chapter on *Rebecca* (1940), though, fittingly reminds us that in classical psychoanalytic theory 'the first ideal object of love for [both] the boy and the girl is the mother'. What this means is that the little girl's love 'starts out to be a lesbian love while the boy's desire starts out to be a heterosexual one' (p. 54). When we first encounter the Joan Fontaine character, she is serving as a paid companion to Mrs Van Hopper, and she tells Maxim that the term 'companion' means 'a friend of the bosom'. In other words, we're shown a literalised version of a little girl's earliest relation with her mother (though you wish that Samuels had noted how such a relation is here forced on the character by the power of money ...). Hitchcock seems to have *enjoyed* being literal when depicting psychoanalytic material! According to Samuels, the transvestite Norman Bates in *Psycho* (1960) enacts literally, i.e., on the level of the Real, 'the subject's Symbolic desire to identify with his mother' (p. 136). And in *Marnie*, the flashback in which the sailor is killed is 'a classic reenactment of the (negative) Oedipus Complex. The daughter hates the father for sleeping with her mother, so she attempts to get rid of him. However, instead of this feminine subject simply repressing the existence of her father by identifying with the desire of her mother, she literally kills off the Symbolic father figure.' (pp. 104-05)

(Here, in parenthesis, I speak as the bemused general reader. It puzzles me that 'identifying with the desire of the mother' would 'get rid of' the father. For surely the mother's desire is *for* the father? Likewise, I was puzzled for a while by that remark apropos *Psycho* about 'the subject's Symbolic desire to identify with his mother'. I had thought that in the Symbolic realm such a desire was ruled out by the incest taboo. But then I recalled remarks about 'identification' from later in the book which proved helpful, at least up to a point - see below.)

After the chapter on *Rebecca*, with its emphasis on that film's 'lesbian homosocial structure' (p. 52), the chapter on *Notorious* (1946) takes up further the notion of a repressed 'primal scene' which is, in fact, a bisexual one. For it appears that Freud was right - that we're all fundamentally bisexual - and that 'in the first instance the primal scene is always perceived [by the child] as sodomitical ... it specifically takes shape as a sodomitical scene between sexually undifferentiated parents' (p 61). Samuels is here quoting queer-theorist Lee Edelman. In turn, this enables him to adduce various 'sodomitical' scenes in *Notorious* (e.g., Devlin's head photographed from behind) and to entertain us with the notion that the film is, in effect, making fun of the stuffy male characters such as Devlin and his boss Prescott who want everything patriarchal and proper. They would control Alicia if they could, but her female fluidity (cf. the work of Luce Irigaray) is hard to pin down. I was distinctly reminded of my analysis of *Rebecca* in 'The MacGuffin' and on the

Web in which Rebecca's 'polymorphous perversity' (not just her Sapphic tendencies) has almost totally traumatised aristocratic husband Max.

According to Samuels, *Notorious* contains many instances in which Alicia 'mediates the same-sex desire that is circulated between men' (p. 63). For example, Alicia is told by husband Alex, who is clearly bisexual, that he considers Prescott 'rather handsome'; when Alicia later conveys this remark to Prescott, the latter 'seems quite pleased by this disclosure'. I think that Samuels's *Notorious* chapter may contain both the best and the worst of his book - unfortunately, some of his interpretations, such as about the precise meaning of the sand in the champagne bottle, approach wildness.

Incidentally, though, Samuels makes a nice point about the keys: that they represent the mother-controlled family secrets which in turn can be associated with the blocked primal scene. They are thus like the MacGuffin: not just a 'hole in the middle of Hitchcock's discourse' but rather the missing object (the so-called maternal phallus) that functions as 'the sign of the missing primal scene' (p. 63).

The *Vertigo* chapter, another helpful one, takes up some of these ideas. We're told, for example, that in Lacan's theory of castration anxiety, the female genitals frighten the male not because they represent the possibility that he may lose his own genitals, but because they reflect his own nothingness - an image of absence that is really the presence of a Real that resists being Symbolised (or Imagined, referring to that part of 'the discourse of everyday life' that is 'the realm of illusion'). The female genitals are thus, in Lacan's words, 'the object of anxiety par excellence' (p. 81). Samuels links this to Freud's theory of foundational bisexuality by adding that 'the horror of the Real is fundamentally a horror of the lack of sexual orientation' (p. 82) - the horror that Devlin had felt in *Notorious*.

Samuels finds here the key to such films as *Vertigo* (1958) itself, and *Rear Window* (1954). For if the horror of the feminine may often represent a displaced horror of bisexuality, of a feminine that brings the Real 'too close' (as they say in *Psycho*), then the male must employ various mental subterfuges or sublimations. For instance, he may 'attempt to sublimate his relationship with the original love-object ... by placing his beloved in the position of an Imaginary identification'. Hence, says Samuels, the appeal of the mysterious Madeleine to Scottie when she masquerades as being possessed by Carlotta (p. 84).

On the other hand, Midge's attempt to intervene and break the hold that Madeleine has over Scottie - the gambit involving Midge's self-portrait - fails utterly, for all the portrait does is remind Scottie of Midge's 'motherliness': it 'subverts [the] process of erasing all traces of the original maternal object' (p. 85).

In effect, then, Madeleine presents herself to Scottie as an absence, artfully evoking, in a non-threatening way, the absence of the Thing. Here I'm reminded of Schopenhauer's theory about art, that it may provide intimations not so much of the 'unknowable' Will as of the 'intermediate' Platonic ideal forms.[3] Religion, likewise, respects what Samuels calls the 'emptiness' of the absent Thing, and he refers to the spaciousness and curved lines of *Vertigo*'s scenes in the church and the museum (pp. 88-89). And again, 'worshipful' attitudes to women, that place them on a pedestal or define them in terms of their inaccessibility, as in the tradition of Courtly Love, provide ways of getting around the incest taboo, of transforming the original bisexual Thing into an acceptable heterosexual object-choice (pp. 87-88).

Other psychological mechanisms are also at work in *Vertigo*. Scottie, after Madeleine's 'suicide', clearly now identifies 'with the lost object - he is no longer trying to hide his own nothingness by projecting it onto the female subject, but rather he is living this nothingness himself' (p. 90). This provides the logic of the image in his dream in which he falls into the open grave, just as Madeleine had supposedly earlier fallen. However, in the last part of the film, we see Scottie once again attaching the idea of freedom 'to the masculone desire to efface the Real by Symbolizing it, by returning to a past event and reversing it in the structure of the death drive' (p. 90). Such returnings as Samuels mentions here are indeed signs of the death drive and its compulsions. Scottie, as I've often said in 'The MacGuffin', is not exactly detached ...

Nor, of course, is Marnie, about whom Samuels makes some acute observations. She wants, he remarks, to 'remain virginal', and she suffers from a 'sense of self-revulsion' (p. 96). What we don't know is whether she 'is a heterosexual woman who hates men, or if she is a lesbian that prefers women, or if she identifies with being a man who loves women, or a bisexual who desires everyone or no one'. Moreover, '[t]he multiplicity of her possible sexual desires is matched by the endless variety of Hitchcock's own subjective positions' (p. 102). To a considerable degree, we're talking now of what I call Hitchcock's 'negative capability' - which I see as embodying a profoundly moral position. Several times in the past, I've invoked, apropos Hitchcock, Schopenhauer's description of the truly compassionate man capable of seeing in endless others 'his own true being', not a non-I but an 'I once more' - which also describes the empathic position attained at times by the true artist, in Schopenhauer's view.[4] And now Samuels tells us that such a position is very much

the basis of Lacan's theory of ethics, a position that allows us to understand how our systems of representation kill off the Real of human existence (p. 147), and where a voice is given to repressed sexualities and subjectivities (p. 2). The chapter on *Marnie* exemplifies what Samuels is talking about here.

Let me be clearer about this. In such films as *Rope* (1948), *Under Capricorn* (1949), and *Marnie*, I see Hitchcock prepared to empathise with characters who are plainly 'beyond the pale', losers, the abject, and to still see in them our common humanity, which is Will. Not only that, but Hitchcock shows here a definite understanding of how we may do such people injustice because of the very mechanisms with which we live our lives. In fact, Samuels notes that Hitchcock's films have often been subjected to the same repressions that they critique, not least because 'the dominant social order cannot tolerate the threat of bisexual desire and multitextuality' (p. 103).

I consider *Marnie* a masterpiece, and I think Samuels helps to show exactly why that may be so. When Marnie steals money from men, he says, what she is really doing is 'challenge the law that has determined her sexuality and presence to be outside of the Symbolic order'. By identifying with the abject object, by resisting being captured by the Other, 'this female subject is able to dig a hole in the place of the Other' (p. 98). Ironically, that hole in which Marnie lives for a time is a true reflection of the nothingness (Kristeva's term) on which society itself is founded, having allowed language to kill the original thing or object. Note that Marnie, in this interpretation, is in direct line of descent from Iris Henderson, the second Mrs de Winter (and/or Rebecca herself), Alicia Huberman, and all the other Hitchcock heroines who fight to hold onto their Real nature ...

Sadly, perhaps, there comes the inevitable surrender. At the end of the film, Marnie tells her husband Mark, 'I don't want to go to jail, I'd rather stay with you.' As Samuels notes, her absorption into the male-controlled heterosexual order is made under the threat of punishment and containment. (Her forced choice can only parody, it seems to me, the Nirvana-like surrender to a truly cosmic nothingness of which Schopenhauer wrote.) Thus the ending of *Marnie* 'reflects on the way that we are socialized to read texts [language] and our selves on the level of deadly choices between identification and abjection' (p. 107).

Samuels's chapter on *Rear Window* strikes me as only a little better than his chapter on *Spellbound*, being altogether too nebulous, not to say humourless. His main idea is that '[w]hat Jefferies wants to see is a certain absence that will block the presence of his own homosexual desire' (p. 115). This formulation derives from Lacan's theory of voyeurism: 'what the voyeur looks to see is the shadow of the Other because shadows make present a certain absence' (p. 113). I'm not saying that either Samuels or Lacan is 'wrong' - or 'right' - only that with such a theory there's not too much that the film critic can convincingly demonstrate. Nonetheless, it's not without interest that Samuels finds Jefferies's very camera 'phallic' (maybe because of its white flashes ...) and interprets the final confrontation between Jefferies and Thorwald as an attempt by the former to blind the all-seeing Other. 'He is not yet ready to come out and speak about his true desire.' (p. 120)

And I readily accept the chapter's conclusion, which defines the whole notion of bi-textuality: 'In Hitchcock's works, we often find the representation of a straight heterosexual narrative that is coupled with a visual bi-textual discourse. Linked to this bi-textuality is the recognition that every subject of the unconscious finds themselves lacking in relation to the dominant Symbolic order.' (p. 121)

* * *

Which brings us back to *The Birds*. Having surveyed various possible readings of what the birds represent, and having decided, with Zizek, that ultimately they represent 'a failed symbolization', Samuels elaborates by saying that 'the birds stand in for the nothingness that is the other side of consciousness and vision' (p. 128). Presumably this nothingness is the same as Marnie senses from her position of abjectness, the nothingness that results from the negation of the original Thing. Zizek's 'failed symbolization', then, is a denial by the Symbolic realm of the Real and hence a failure to give (guilt-free) satisfaction.

Samuels proceeds to note how various characters in the film, and critics/scholars of the film, both feel constrained to provide explanations of the bird attacks, as if they all want to deny and 'hold at bay the possibility that in the Real there is no intentionality or reason' (p. 128). My comment on this must be that all of it was anticipated by Kant and Schopenhauer. The latter formulated his 'principle of sufficient reason' whereby everything must have a why. But what he also reported was that beyond all our explanations will always be Kant's Thing-in-itself, i.e., Will, which is essentially unknowable. It's not just the same as desire, though, and it includes the natural realm. For that reason, I end up agreeing more with Camille Paglia's 'Coleridgean' reading of *The Birds* than with Samuels's Lacanian one. In a recent interview, Paglia referred to *The Birds*'s 'vision of nature as savage ... as this enormous unknowable force, much

greater than human life'. For me, the birds *are* Will, just as we all are, and though we attempt to 'explain' them, or to explain them away, or to deny them significance altogether, the fact of the matter is that they are simply *there*.

Of course, Samuels does see most of this. His chapter on *The Birds* concludes with the wise remark that the film presents us with 'our true presence in the world divorced from any level of Imaginary intentionality and Symbolic definition' (p. 132). No less wise is Samuels's call, in an Epilogue ("*Psycho* and the Horror of the Bi-Textual Unconscious"), for that new order of knowledge that would have us recognise our Real nature. He refers us to none other than 'Mrs Bates' herself. At the end of *Psycho*, her voice 'has become the bi-textual voice of the unconscious that calls out of the void and articulates the ethical demand for a return to the Real' (p. 147).

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Notes

1. In a BBC interview, date unknown.
2. For another reading of the *Spellbound* dream sequence, and of the film itself, see 'MacGuffin' 15.
3. Commentators have questioned why Schopenhauer introduced the matter of 'forms' into his theory at all, seeing it as unnecessary (at best). Why not, rather, intimations of Will itself? But could Schopenhauer have felt some 'Lacanian' imperative at this point, that he 'softened' his brilliant insight? (I still maintain, though, that overall Schopenhauer's philosophy subsumes Lacan's psychoanalytic theory.)
4. See, in particular, my essay on *The Trouble With Harry* (1956) in 'MacGuffin' 21, p. 19, where I quote Schopenhauer on how the good person 'feels himself intimately akin to all beings' - an idea that is surely very potent in that film, a favourite of Hitchcock himself.

Some thoughts occasioned by reading Camille Paglia's 'The Birds'

[The following musings are re-printed verbatim from the nightly (four nights a week) "Editor's Day" feature of our Web site. A full book-review of '*The Birds*' will appear in our next issue.]

August 3 An enthusiastic review of Camille Paglia's BFI monograph on Hitchcock's *The Birds* is now up on our New Publications page. I note there that Paglia locates the film in the line of Coleridge and British Romanticism, and I say how well this fits with my own 'Schopenhauerian' understanding of the film. 'Coleridge and Schopenhauer', I point out, 'were contemporaries, deeply influenced by Plato and Kant; and both held that animal nature is red in tooth and claw.' Tonight I received a message from friend TG suggesting that it's wrong to mix Coleridge and Kant. But Coleridge-authority Kathleen Raine disagrees. 'As a young man', she notes, 'Coleridge visited Germany in order to study the language and philosophy of Kant and Schelling, with whom he has many affinities.' Also, Raine notes that '[f]or Coleridge, both as Christian and Platonist, and as transcendentalist, mind is primary ... he considered Imagination to be "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."' Paglia's chapter on Coleridge in her great book 'Sexual Personae' comments that '[t]he self-divinizing Romantic poet displaces Jehovah'. This is very close, I suggest, to Schopenhauer's notion of genius - and what I call elsewhere on this Web site 'the transcendental pretence', something that's effectively critiqued by Hitchcock's own *Vertigo* (1958). Moreover, it seems to me that the line of Coleridge and Romanticism that Paglia detects in *The Birds* may in fact have arrived there via Germany, so to speak. As for the idea that 'nature can be awfully rough on you' (as Hitchcock said apropos *The Birds*), that's quite in keeping with Schopenhauer's understanding. For him, 'the world of nature is a world of perpetual screaming. Schopenhauer's view of this is a nightmare vision' (Bryan Magee, 'The Great Philosophers', 1987). Paglia notes that initial sketches by art-designer Robert Boyle for *The Birds* were based on Edvard Munch's 'The Scream' (1893) - a work often considered pre-(German) Expressionist. Okay. This has all been preliminary. Tomorrow the fun begins.

August 4 One of the films that Hitchcock certainly saw, as part of his mandatory research, when he was making *Psycho* (1960) was Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959), adapted from the 1958 play by Tennessee Williams. It stars Katherine Hepburn as the possessive, oddball mother, Montgomery Clift as the ambivalent young neuro-surgeon, and Elizabeth Taylor as the young woman whom the Hepburn character wants lobotomised because she effectively knows too much ... In Camille Paglia's great monograph on *The Birds*, she notes a likely influence on that film of the Tennessee Williams play, and refers to the latter's vision of nature as voracious: as the character Mrs Venables says, 'We're all of us trapped by this devouring creation.' In turn, Paglia speculates that the possessive Mrs Brenner in *The Birds* effectively 'lobotomises' Melanie Daniels ('Tippi' Hedren), her rival for her son Mitch (Rod Taylor), and notes that by the end of the film Melanie is 'out of her mind' (p. 87). I agree with Paglia that the influence is likely (or, anyway, that a parallel exists), and tonight I simply want to point out how *Suddenly, Last Summer* has other echoes in Hitchcock's films that Paglia hasn't recorded. First, the possessive mother with a sexually ambivalent or gay son (the homosexual Sebastian in Mankiewicz's film) is one obvious parallel with *Psycho* that Hitchcock would have immediately spotted. Note that by the end of

Suddenly, Last Summer the viewer somehow thinks of the Clift character as a 'double' for the dead Sebastian (both have occasion to dress in white, for example). And indeed Mrs Venables finally goes 'psycho' and *does* address the doctor as Sebastian. Bird imagery and the line about how we're all 'trapped' are further parallels between the two films. But there's something else. Sebastian, we're told, had once thought to 'give up the torments of this world and become a Buddhist monk'. Is this the inspiration for why Norman at the end of *Psycho* so much resembles a Buddhist monk - as discussed on our FAQs page? Certainly the final flashback of *Suddenly, Last Summer* is the structural model for the climactic scene of Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964)! More later.

August 5 Note that *Suddenly, Last Summer* gives us a son-dependent mother who finally goes 'psycho', whereas Psycho reverses the situation by giving us a mother-dependent son who finally ... And in both cases, there's a strange interiority at the end, in which different identities merge, and the viewer may wonder just who is who - and whether s/he, the viewer, isn't just a bit 'psycho', too! (However, both films are careful to also leave us with a feeling of having been extricated from the mire, or swamp: e.g., in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, the character played by Elizabeth Taylor is 'saved'.) I see here a paradigm for the 'subjectivity' of *The Birds*, in which the viewer is again 'implicated' in the story. That's what I want to talk about tonight. There are a couple of key shots. One is the literally birds'-eye view of Bodega Bay after fire has broken out in the town square (outside the Tides Restaurant). This always reminds me of a scene from Turgenev's story 'Ghosts' describing 'the earth as seen from above, when the humans look small and unimportant and are locked in eternal struggle with blind forces which they cannot control' - a scene, Turgenev's biographer tells us, that was inspired by a passage in Schopenhauer. And the other key shot in *The Birds* occurs when the frightened mother inside the Tides Restaurant turns to Melanie Daniels - and us (represented by the camera lens) - and says, 'I think you're the cause of all this'. This really turns the tables on us with a vengeance, because each viewer naturally wonders what has caused the birds to attack! As Kant and Schopenhauer remind us, the idea of a causal principle which 'authorizes us everywhere to search for the why' is inherent in all our dealings with the world. Schopenhauer calls it 'the principle of sufficient reason'. However, what he also tells us is that beyond all our explanations is another, greater reality, Kant's *Ding-an-sich* (the Thing-in-itself), which is unknowable. Schopenhauer called it the world's 'Will'. Okay. As I've said here before, I see the birds in Hitchcock's film as finally representing the inexplicable: they function as Will. Camille Paglia, though, sees the birds as expressing the film's (Coleridgean) 'vision of nature as savage ... as this enormous unknowable force, much greater than human life'. Is there a difference in our views? Find out tomorrow!

August 6 In *The Birds*, when the birds are massing for an aerial bombardment outside the Tides Restaurant, Mitch confers with the fisherman Sebastian and proposes a strategy of making smoke-bombs to confuse the attackers, just as fog has done in the past. Camille Paglia has a clever observation about this: '"Make our own fog!" - [is this] a wry comment by the script on the human hunger for meaning?' (p. 71) It may well be, and Paglia has her own explanation of the birds. She sees the crows who attack the school children 'as Colridgean emissaries vandalising sentimental Wordsworthian notions of childhood' (p. 67). You think of how Wordsworth is effectively mocked early in Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972) when a politician who is glibly quoting him ('Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive!') is suddenly interrupted by the presence of a dead body ... Hitchcock of course delights in defeating everybody's complacent notions, and *The Birds* may be the ultimate example of what I call his 'outflanking technique'. I agree with Paglia that the birds represent an 'enormous unknowable force, much greater than human life', which is why I see them as embodying 'Will' (which Schopenhauer likened to a life-force that is also a death-force), but even that way of thinking about them by Paglia may not be adequate as a definition. It rather *reifies* the birds as (mere) force. When the frightened mother addresses the camera and says, 'I think you're the cause of all this', Paglia can only say that the moment has 'a mythic power' (p. 74). In fact, it's an excellent example of how, when confronted (so to speak) by the world's Will, which Schopenhauer further defined as the mysterious Thing-in-itself, human grasp is plainly inadequate. In making *Lifeboat* (1944), Hitchcock said that he intended to show up the Allies' disunity so that they might then find common cause against their enemy, the Nazi. Effectively, *The Birds* operates on a similar principle, first showing up individual (subjective) inadequacy so that a truer knowledge may be arrived at. (Which isn't to say that the birds are our natural enemy, and young Cathy's line at the end about the love-birds may be a nod to that fact.)

August 10 As I say on our New Publications page, practically the only criticism I can make of Camille Paglia's book on *The Birds* is that she doesn't take the full measure of Hitchcock's 'subjective cinema'. Here's another example. After the birds' final dive-bombing of the Brenners' house, a lull occurs. 'They're going', says Mitch (Rod Taylor). Three successive shots of individuals in close-up show each person, in turn, rising into the frame which is initially empty. Three times the frame is filled. Then the camera pulls back, showing the characters at full length, together ... What this does is involve the audience, who three times must say, 'What's going on here? ... Ah, now we see.' And finally what we see are the three main characters (Mitch, Melanie, Lydia) united by their ordeal. Which of course is the idea. But first we've had to be as puzzled as they have been: our visual puzzle (the

empty frame) matches their aural puzzle (the diminishing sound of the birds outside the house). Though Paglia misses all of this, she describes the actual shots splendidly: 'in flickering chiaroscuro from the fireplace ... the three figures ... [finally] stand stock-still, listening, turned to stone like entombed colossi. ... The scene is as beautifully blocked as in live theatre.' (p. 81) Now let's come back to the scene in the Tides Restaurant where the frightened mother accuses Melanie/the camera/ us: 'I think you're the cause of all this.' Given the subjective nature of Hitchcock's cinema, she's dead right, of course! Right from the start of the film, we've become more and more involved, exactly as Melanie has been getting more deeply involved with Mitch and the people of Bodega Bay. But Hitchcock's cinema is really *doubly* subjective, because it naturally partakes of the nature of our experiences generally. As Schopenhauer insisted, we're constantly bound in subjectivity. That's why he began his most famous book by saying, 'The world is my representation' - which I take to be the exact equivalent of what the frightened mother tells Melanie/us. We are watching the film, and thus in Schopenhauer's sense we are making or causing it to happen! But there's still another aspect of this moment in which the mother gazes straight at the camera, and I'll talk about that tomorrow.

August 11 When the frightened mother in the Tides Restaurant in *The Birds* accuses us of being 'the cause of all this', I don't think she's only remarking on how we each create our own cinema inside our head, so to speak. I think she's also reminding us of our predatory nature, of how looking isn't a purely neutral act - it has an aggressive component. Being alive and being predatory are connected (as Schopenhauer, for one, well knew). Now, it's pertinent that the author Charles Dickens (1812-1870), surely Hitchcock's main artistic forebear, was fascinated by waxworks and corpses; both, he once remarked, possess the 'one underlying expression of *looking at something that could not return a look*' (his italics). Eyes fascinated Dickens (see, for example, John Carey, 'The Violent Effigy: a study of Dickens's imagination', pp. 103-04), as I think they fascinated Hitchcock. And whenever in Hitchcock's films a look is returned directly to the camera, as by the murderer (Raymond Burr) in *Rear Window* (1954), the effect is complex. It can simultaneously startle us (because it goes against a film convention), make us feel uneasy (it's aggressive), and yet also make us feel acknowledged and that much more alive. Hitchcock was aware of all these matters; and I recall a line of dialogue that was going to be included in *Vertigo* (1958) and spoken by Judy (Kim Novak): 'You've got to prove you're alive, these days.' In the life-and-death world of *The Birds*, eyes are a special item of attention. 'Cover your eyes!' shouts Mitch, as the birds begin one of their attacks. It does the farmer Dan Fawcett no good, of course, for he dies horribly with his eyes pecked out (as we, and Lydia Brenner, *see*). It's the deep logic of the film that we feel that the birds' actions are somehow our own, that they emanate with us, though that we're also vulnerable ourselves, and hence the appropriateness of all the film's eye-imagery and of the frightened mother's accusatory gaze at us in the Tides Restaurant. But finally it all comes down to a matter of the nature of Will, of that which is everywhere and in everything, and is a life-force that is also a death-force (as Schopenhauer defined it). A 'no exit' situation, really.

The Fragments of the Mirror: *Vertigo* and its Sources

(a) Prologue

In Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955), ex-cat-burglar John Robie (Cary Grant) has returned to his hotel room from a tryst with Francie Stevens (Grace Kelly) during which the two of them had dined in her mother's suite and watched, through the window, a display of fireworks above the bay. Suddenly Francie invades John's room with an anguished demand that he 'give them back - Mother's jewels!' This incident isn't to be found in David Dodge's novel (1953) on which the film is based. Rather, it may recall a much earlier, and famous, episode in fiction: the central incident of William Wilkie Collins's great mystery-story about a jewel, 'The Moonstone' (1868). Of the latter, scholar Anthea Trodd writes: 'the novel owes its career in the psychoanalytic journals to the fact that its central episode takes place at midnight in the heroine's bedroom when her tacit acquiescence in the theft of her valuable becomes hysterical reaction by morning'.[1]

As we'll see, there are other cases of Collins's (direct or indirect) influence on Hitchcock. But here's a rather different kind of 'borrowing' by the director. Stephen Rebello has shown that when Hitchcock was planning *Psycho* (1960), he looked again at Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Les Diaboliques/The Fiends* (1954), which was based on the novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Hitchcock particularly noted aspects of the French film's publicity campaign, as well as its use of 'moody, dirty-dishes-in-the-sink black and white'.[2] In addition, he probably enjoyed seeing again on screen the actor Charles Vanel who in *Les Diaboliques* plays the snooping Inspector Fichet and in *To Catch a Thief* the edgy restaurateur Bertani. We'll see that Vanel (1892-1979) seems to have specialised in appearing in plots based on a 'big lie'. *Les Diaboliques* is certainly that, as it involves characters conspiring to stage an elaborate hoax version of events in order to try and frighten their victim to death.

Such plots found their way into several Hollywood movies, and Humphrey Bogart appeared in at least two of them. In Curtis Bernhardt's *Conflict* (1945), he plays a wife-murderer whom psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet tries to scare into a confession by making it seems that the wife is still alive. At one point, Bogart visits a pawnshop and sees what looks like his wife's recent handwriting in the ledger. He leaves to fetch a police officer. When the two men return, a different pawnbroker awaits them. This man denies all knowledge of a colleague or an assistant. Moreover, the line in the ledger now bears someone else's signature. Here of course there are echoes of Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) and an anticipation - perhaps a direct influence on - the scene in *North by Northwest* (1959) in which Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) returns with the police to his abductor's house where all evidence of what happened the night before has been erased or removed. We'll see that *Conflict* certainly influenced a key moment in *Vertigo*.

But another influence on the scene in *North by Northwest* (and the one in *Conflict*) is likely. Vincent Sherman's *All Through the Night* (1942) depicts Bogart as a good-at-heart racketeer who helps to smash a gang of Nazi fifth-columnists who use a New York antique-auction business as their cover. After Bogart is kidnapped by the gang, he manages to escape and return with the police - only to find a surly, know-nothing attendant minding the tidied-up premises. The attendant denies everything! Now, the influence of *All Through the Night* on *North by Northwest* is made especially likely by the fact that another of the scenes in Sherman's film looks like the forerunner of Hitchcock's memorable auction-gallery episode. Needing an excuse to enter the gang's storeroom next to the auction room, Bogart hits on the ruse of making an unusually high (and therefore unbeatable) bid for an old desk - to the consternation of the auctioneer (Conrad Veidt) and his sinister offsiders (Judith Anderson, Peter Lorre), who see what he is up to.

Of course, in Thornhill's case, he makes crazier bids, for his intention is to force the gallery staff to call the police. Another 1942 film may have inspired this aspect of Hitchcock's auction-gallery scene. Sidney Lanfield's *My Favourite Blonde* is actually something of a spoof of Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* (1935), and it cast Madeleine Carroll alongside Bob Hope to help make its point. In a typical escapade, Hope and Carroll find themselves holed-up in a hotel room by foreign agents who have staked out the building. Desperate, the pair pretend to be a feuding husband and wife (as in Hitchcock's recently-released *Mr and Mrs Smith*), and start to wreck everything in sight. Soon the hotel management arrives with the law ...

So it looks as though Hitchcock, somewhere along the line, saw how he might amalgamate these two scenes from different films in order to maximise the comic effect. That he kept a file of just such ideas was revealed in an exhibitors' campaign-sheet for *Torn Curtain* (1966). Most of Hitchcock's films, it said, 'begin in pigeonholes where he stores sudden thoughts and ideas'. The release quoted Hitchcock as saying that his file contained 'several score' ideas for films. But he then added: 'The volume is the least important aspect of all. Only quality counts in that file.'

I've cited Curtis Bernhardt as a director who may have influenced Hitchcock, i.e., whose film *Conflict* contains at least one scene that is echoed in Hitchcock's work. Bernhardt (1899-1981) was a German who came to Hollywood after working in Great Britain and France; what's to our purpose is that *Conflict* was based on a story by two authors at least one of whom had his own roots in Germany - the American-born Robert Siodmak (1900-1973). Siodmak's career had definite involvement with Hitchcock's: for a time in the 1940s both men even shared the same producer, Joan Harrison.[3] Moreover, like Bernhardt, Siodmak had worked in both Germany and France, before he returned to America in 1937. Siodmak's *The File on Thelma Jordan* (1949) stars Barbara Stanwyk and Wendell Corey. Not only does its noirish plot combine elements of Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944) with aspects of Hitchcock's *The Paradine Case* (1947), but it contains a key moment in which the two principals, hitherto separated in the frame, back together behind a barred gate - thereby providing an image of complicity which Hitchock almost certainly noted and then used with telling effect in *Strangers on a Train* (1951).[4]

And there's one more German expatriate who belongs in this article. I'm thinking of William Dieterle (1893-1972) whose career, initially as an actor, had already begun when Hitchcock worked for a year in Germany in 1925. Coming to Hollywood at the start of the sound era, Dieterle soon confirmed his already high reputation as a director. By the time he made *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), he had shown himself to be 'at his best, an incomparable master of crowd scenes and pictorial composition'.[5] In that film, an 'umbrella' motif is artfully used. It culminates in the spectacle of a vast sea of umbrellas belonging to an angry mob waiting in the rain outside the Palais de Justice where Zola (Paul Muni) is on trial. Most of the shouts heard are against Zola and for the Army; when a pro-Zola voice is raised, its owner is promptly set upon by the other 'umbrellas' nearby. This intriguing scene would be echoed three years later by the episode in Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* involving the assassination of a diplomat on the rain-swept steps of the Amsterdam town hall and the gunman's escape across a square full of bobbing brollies.[6]

(b) *Vertigo* and vitalism

'The world', said the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), 'is my representation'. He meant that everyone sees the world subjectively, as mere appearance. But the world is also what it really is, Kant's unknowable *Ding-an-sich*. Schopenhauer called that reality the world's Will, and characterised it as a life-force that is also a death-force. Schopenhauer's heirs included Nietzsche and Freud.

It's to Freud in particular, and his writings on instinctual repression and other matters, that I want to turn. For reasons of space, I'll concentrate on the brilliant essay, "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*" (1907). This analyses the 1903 novella by North German playwright and novelist Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911), a work described by its author as a 'Pompeian fantasy'.[7] Here's a synopsis:

A young German archeologist, Norbert Hanold, is so attracted to the image of a girl in an ancient relief which he sees in a Roman museum, that he makes a plaster cast of the relief and begins to fantasise and dream about it. Part of his fantasy is that the girl had died in Pompeii when Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D. The obsessed Hanold calls the girl Gradiva, 'she who steps along' (so-named by him because of her distinctive gait), and he resolves to visit Pompeii that very spring in a seemingly impossible quest to find the girl herself. When he gets there, he does indeed see someone who resembles her! She comes out of a house and passes trippingly across a row of stepping-stones to the other side of the street. Hanold follows her. It's midday, the traditional 'hour of ghosts'. Suddenly the girl vanishes into a building. Hanold hastens after her and, entering the building, soon finds her again, sitting on some low steps between two yellow columns. He is emboldened to make her acquaintance. She tells him in German that her name is Zöe (which means 'life' in Greek). Over the ensuing days the acquaintance grows, though Hanold persists in his belief that Gradiva and Zöe are one and the same person. In fact, the girl happens to be a childhood sweetheart of his, which explains why she is happy to enact his fantasy. Finally, she reveals to him who she is (her German surname, Bertgang, actually means the same as Gradiva). Hanold finds that he is cured of his delusion, and his repressions, and the two people become lovers.

So here life triumphs over death. A deep subjective fantasy having its roots in a forgotten childhood memory receives an elaborate unearthing, which suffices to free both people to face the world afresh - though that world no doubt still holds unknown rigours of its own. For some reason, I think of *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961), as well as Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) and *Vertigo*![8]

We know that Hitchcock in the 1940s studied Freud.[9] Given the close resemblance of parts of 'Gradiva' (even in synopsis) to parts of *Vertigo* - witness the respective heroines' 'vanishing acts'[10] - can one doubt that one of Freud's essays that Hitchcock sooner or later read was the analysis of 'Gradiva', and/or perhaps Jensen's original novella? In any event, many of Freud's comments in the essay are pertinent to Hitchcock's film. I'll mention a few of them.

Importantly, Hanold in 'Gradiva' at first actually prefers his fantasy to the reality. The real Gradiva/Zöe turns out to be a neighbour of his whose existence he had simply 'forgotten'. As Freud shows, Hanold goes to Italy to indulge the fantasy and escape the reality. Moreover, after he discovers the relief in the museum, he's happy to elaborate his fantasy so long as it seems to fit his professional interest as an archeologist - but he's more than a little disconcerted when the flesh-and-blood Gradiva/Zöe materialises. And not just because a dream isn't supposed to turn real. There's an Oedipal conflict going on in Hanold, though ironically Freud never refers to it as such. We learn that Zöe lives with her father, a noted Professor of Zoology, over the way from Hanold in a university town in Germany. Hanold seems to have been cowered by the proximity of such an eminent man and his daughter. As children, he and Zöe had played together, but the time soon came when he had felt the need to put aside childish things and concentrate on his own career. He had abandoned his playmate. At the same time, Zöe's work-preoccupied father had tended to ignore her as well - a man's prerogative, no doubt.

Concerning an Oedipal syndrome in *Vertigo*, we may sense how Gavin Elster's relation to Madeleine/Judy initially appears to Scottie to be that of a (fairly amenable) father/guardian, as well as that of a husband. On another occasion, Freud would note that in some male fantasies, a woman already attached to another man - husband, fiancé, or friend - is an especially desirable love-object.[11] Thus we may infer special reasons for why Madeleine/Judy appeals to Scottie, and what she means to him. But there may be others. When Scottie finally loses his beloved, it's due to the intervention of a shadowy mother-figure (about whom I'll say more below).

Freud emphasises how Hanold succeeds for a time in keeping Gradiva/Zöe at a certain distance. By identifying her with a classical setting, as for instance in an early dream when he sees her enter the temple of Apollo, Hanold puts her on a pedestal. But now, at Pompeii, a turning-point is reached. He rests his hand on hers, ostensibly to test her corporeal reality yet clearly with an underlying erotic motive. You think of how in *Vertigo*, sitting before the fire in his apartment, Scottie places his hand on Madeleine's as if by accident when he reaches for her coffee-cup ...

Above all, it's Freud's comments on how Gradiva/Zöe shows a 'peculiar oscillation between death and life'[12] that seem to me to catch the *Vertigo* note. Freud remarks that Pompeii provides an apt symbol for both repression and for the excavation of buried memories. Clearly, San Francisco, with its colourful history part-destroyed by earthquake and fire, and by the fog of memory itself, offers an equivalent. And if Gradiva/Zöe and Hanold both move between death and life, Madeleine/Judy and Scottie do the same. Indeed, *everything* in *Vertigo* reflects such a dualism or ambiguity. For instance, is the Sequoia forest (whose trees are 'always green, ever-living') really a place of life, or is it rather (being dark and overwhelming) a place of death? Is even the busy city itself truly living, or is it just a place of death-in-life? (Its people seem to move as if underwater.)

Here I'm reminded of Nietzsche's phrase, 'Man is something to be overcome',[13] and of how Hitchcock had encountered that German philosopher, if only indirectly, through the writings of such authors as John Buchan ('The Power-House', 1913) and George Bernard Shaw ('Man and Superman', 1903). I think Scottie aspires to be an *Übermensch* figure, and that he betrays as much when, for example, he disdains both Midge's pity and Judy's 'sentimentality'. Nietzsche of course despised compassion as a sign of the inauthentic individual, of the common herd, though he allowed it in the Superman himself.[14] However, Hitchcock's attitude to the Superman was always ambivalent. Hence the critiques of that figure you find in *Lifeboat* (1944), *Rope* (1948) - and *Vertigo*. And hence the ambivalence the latter film shows towards life, for such ambivalence marks a continuing degree of repression in Scottie certainly but maybe also in the filmmakers.

That's to say, I think Hitchcock's position was closer to the pessimist Schopenhauer's than to the optimist Nietzsche's. Whereas Nietzsche regarded will as entirely positive, as the source of man's strength,[15] Schopenhauer saw Will as a mixed blessing (though it's all we've got), as inherently blind and destructive as well as vitalising and procreative.

As we're about to see, the author Edgar Allan Poe expressed 'a wish to get out of the world'. Was this *just* a neurotic impulse?

(c) Some literary sources for *Vertigo*

Here I want to treat, quite briefly, works by half-a-dozen authors of differing nationalities and reputations. Those authors are: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Edgar Allan Poe, Alexandre Dumas *fils*, William Wilkie Collins, Thomas Mann, and Robert Nathan.

(i) Hitchcock expresses appreciation of Goethe's 'Faust' (1808, 1831) in his article "Pourquoi J'ai Peur la Nuit"/ "Why I Am Afraid of the Dark".[16] I think Scottie in *Vertigo* may be seen to resemble a Faust-figure (as well as an aspiring Superman), and in evidence it will be helpful to consider Camille Paglia's thumbnail summary of Goethe's great drama:

> *Gretchen is naïve sentiment, Mephistopheles cynical sophistication. Faust is caught in the middle, like all mankind.*[17]

Scottie, too, is someone 'caught in the middle'. He aspires to rise above the common herd but is finally defeated by his own repressions, a condition represented by his acrophobia (fear of heights). Midge notes his considerable ambition when she remarks on how he'd wanted to be not just a 'bright young lawyer' but Chief of Police. Right there, though, she's implying why she'd broken off her engagement to him as far back as their college days. In effect, she was always destined to play Gretchen (Margaret) to his Faust. She had sensed almost from the start that she lacked something that he sought, something linked to a will-to-power. Something ultimately mysterious. Nonetheless, for those with eyes to see it, Midge has a special quality of her own, her capacity for compassion. Think of her reaction to the story of Carlotta ('Poor thing!')[18] ...

Then there's the film's Mephistopheles, the suave and fiendish Gavin Elster. He quickly grasps Scottie's frustrations and discontent. In effect, he tempts him with his true heart's-desire, for Madeleine is to Scottie the very symbol of worldly 'colour, excitement, power, freedom' yet she's also someone who is still mysterious and *other*-worldly.

That is, Madeleine is like Goethe's Helen of Troy who supplants the simple and abused Gretchen in Faust's fancy and points him toward 'the world of eternity where all the opposites are transcended' (as Jungian analyst Jolande Jacobi puts it).[19] In Scottie's and Madeleine's case, I think that for 'opposites' we may also read 'dualisms'. And Scottie, like Faust, glimpses happiness for a time, only to be left desolate when Madeleine/Judy 'departs' (cf 'Faust', Part Two, Act III).

Moreover, Goethe's drama surely gives us the best clue as to why Scottie finally loses Judy. His loss, remember, follows hard on the mother-superior's intervention, her apparition rising up like some dark, chthonic threat. As her very title suggests, she represents what Camille Paglia calls the Great Mother! In turn, her apparition may recall Faust's journey to the supernatural realm of 'the Mothers' where the spirit of Helen exists in eternity. As Paglia says:

> *The Mothers appear in 'Faust' when the hero tries to materialise the spirit of Helen. Adult love is overshadowed by maternal claims to priority. The male struggles through his sexual stages, returning to the mother even when he thinks himself most free of her.*[20]

Paglia notes how Faust 'descending to the Mothers makes a journey to *terra incognita*, his own repressed feminine side, where his mother still dwells'.[21] Curiously, whereas in most modern treatments by artists of the Great Mother, 'she controls only green nature', in 'Faust' she inhabits a 'gloomy Stygian cavern with which western myth associates swarthy male hierarchs'.[22] Once again *Vertigo*'s Sequoia forest and its dualisms comes to mind.

(ii) Of all authors, Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49) fascinated the young Hitchcock 'most of all'.[23] Interestingly, Hitchcock would remark that he had felt 'an enormous pity' for Poe's life which 'had never been happy'.[24] He added that it was because he had been so taken with Poe's stories that he afterwards made suspense films. Literary scholar Karl Miller[25] says many illuminating things about Poe's work that I find relevant to *Vertigo*. For instance, he notes that several of the stories express 'a wish to get out of the world', and cites as examples 'William Wilson' and 'The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall'. It's an observation that surely applies with equal force to Scottie, a part of whom clearly wishes to be, in a sense, upwardly mobile. If he could, he would even escape the spiral of history itself, whose image is the cross-section of the felled Sequoia. (In this connection, I also think of how Schopenhauer praised Kant for showing that we can't get out of the world 'by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement it is perhaps not impossible to do so'.[26] I'll come back to this.)

However, Miller adds that there was a more cautious, stay-at-home side to Poe:

> *But romance is variance, as well as velocity and vertigo, and the soaring self vies with a self that stays, knowing that flights may fail.*

What Poe wanted, says Miller, was to escape life's 'enigmas' but not to go too far away: 'to depart, yet live' (the quoted words are Hans Pfaall's). Accordingly, Poe once told a woman friend that he'd like to live in a cottage 'not *too* far secluded from the world'. In turn, Poe's own journeys are said to

> *embody the search for a mother, and an effort to regain the mother he had lost, and his 'depart, yet live' may be matched with the tension in his writings between an impulse to guard against the horrors of premature burial and an impulse to be interred with the maternal remains. No one has given such point to the traditional joke about the romantic rhyme of 'womb' and 'tomb'.*

The single tale of Poe's most relevant to *Vertigo* is certainly 'Ligeia' - where, though, contra Hitchcock's film, the lost love, Ligeia, is the dark-haired one, and the woman who comes to embody her is a blonde, the Lady Rowena. Nonetheless, it's clear that Ligeia is one of Poe's 'tyrant mothers', as Camille Paglia calls her: 'The [male] narrator of *Ligeia* is a "child" beneath the tutelage and "infinite supremacy" of the heroine'.[27] The narrator describes her as having 'the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth', and as a woman of 'immense' learning. You think of how Scottie's obsessed, even worshipful, pursuit of Madeleine (like also Hanold's of Gradiva, and Faust's of Helen) accrues ever-richer associations of religion, art, and Romantic-cum-Platonic ideality. As for Madeleine's blonde, i.e., non-dark hair, it's one more of the ambiguous or conflicting details that the Catholic Hitchcock gave the character: Madeleine's very name can connote both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene.[28]

Central to 'Ligeia' is the notion that death is but an infirmity of man's will. Three times Poe's tale quotes the following passage from 'Lux Orientalis' by English theologian Joseph Glanvill (1636-80):

> *And the will ... dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doeth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*

Ligeia dies with that last sentence on her lips. Earlier, the following crucial passage had given us the narrator's train of association even as it eerily anticipates Scottie's view of Madeleine and evokes Kim Novak's remarkable performance in Hitchcock's film:

> *An* intensity *in thought, action, or speech was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes ...*

The links to *Vertigo* are several: for example, you think immediately of the film's credits-sequence and the woman's darting eyes. Most crucially, though, what connects the female protagonists of the two works is how they are seen by the respective men (Poe's narrator; Scottie) to embody the key to escaping, or explaining, life's cruel enigmas - though still themselves subject to that cruelty. The question I would ask is: whence comes the cruelty? Is it, as Nietzsche would imply, all a matter of the world's will that can be opposed (so to speak) by *stronger* human willing? Or is there an impersonal element, as I think both Joseph Glanvill and Arthur Schopenhauer saw? 'Ligeia' pivots on that question. Some commentators interpret the end of the story as signifying the woman's actually being, or becoming, God: Ligeia reappears in the flesh and lineaments of the second wife's corpse.[29] But is the intensity of will manifested here really that of Ligeia herself? Or of some other agency turned against itself, such as Kant's *Ding-an-sich*? Or nature? That is, is it mainly a *symbolic* willing? In truth, I find the ending of Hitchcock's film rather more compatible with the understanding shared by Glanvill and by Schopenhauer, that 'God' or 'Will' is ultimately not a matter of deliberate human volition at all. To me, the ending of *Vertigo* shows Scottie's inability to abandon self-centredness ('I made it', he exclaims, revealingly). After all, a definition of Nirvana is that it requires a *yielding*, even unto death, of the individual will to the world's Will; and Scottie's inability to do that indeed leaves him more desolate than ever. In short, his ascent of the mission bell-tower merely *parodies* the 'perpendicular movement', i.e., transcendence, of which Schopenhauer spoke, as it also parodies Nietzsche's notion of the soaring, joyous Superman. We'll shortly see a similar paradox operating in Thomas Mann's 'Death in Venice'.

(iii) First, though, a word about Hitchcock's 'quoting' of the novel and play 'La Dame aux Camélias' by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (1824-95). That work, of course, contains another of fiction's 'archetypal' fascinating women (like Ligeia), justifying literary scholar David Coward's recent claim that courtesan Marguerite Gautier exists 'at the centre of the collective unconscious' - even though, by the same token, she doesn't 'properly belong with Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina on the high slopes of literature'.[30] When making *Vertigo*, Hitchcock surely had Marguerite in mind, and specifically this passage from the novel (spoken by Armand Duval):

> *'A few minutes later, as I loitered on the boulevard, I saw Marguerite at the window of one of the restaurant's large rooms: leaning on the balcony, she was pulling the petals one by one off the camellias in her bouquet.'*

Armand has just been introduced to Marguerite in a box at the Opera, and now he is more than ever infatuated with this woman whom he had hitherto watched only from a distance. The moment he describes here has at least three distinct correspondences in *Vertigo*. For a start, Scottie first sees 'Madeleine' at Ernie's Restaurant dining with Gavin after husband and wife have been to the Opera. (Perhaps it had been 'La Traviata', with its re-telling of the Marguerite Gautier story.) But for some days after that, he watches her only from a distance as he trails her around San Francisco at Gavin's request (Gavin professes to be troubled by his wife's recent behaviour).

Later, just before Madeleine's first suicide attempt, Scottie sees her pulling apart a nosegay of flowers and throwing them one by one into the bay. The flowers appear to be mainly rosebuds, i.e., not camellias, but in any case what we sense from Madeleine's gesture is her feeling that her past life (with its various affairs?) hasn't amounted to much. The *surrendering* of the nosegay to the sea thus serves as an image of the death drive and of 'Nirvana' which, significantly, appals the Scottie character in the *Vertigo* novel, discussed below, where such an attitude is likened to the alleged unthinking passivity of animals.

And again, Scottie twice sees the woman he has been following appear at an upstairs window, once as Madeleine and once as Judy. The 'theatrical' connotations of these two moments suitably suggest Scottie's rivetted attention.[31] I was reminded that Hitchcock may have previously found occasion to refer to Dumas's tale when I recently re-read Australian critic Adrian Martin's 1984 article on *Notorious* (1946), where he notes how the self-disgusted Alicia in that film 'corresponds to a certain feminine stereotype leading back precisely one hundred years to Marguerite Gautier in Dumas's *Lady of the Camellias* ("I had a sort of hope I should kill myself by all these excesses")'.[32]

(iv) Hitchcock called English novelist William Wilkie Collins (1824-89) 'quite brilliant',[33] and Collins's 'The Woman in White' (1860) has been described by at least one authority as, 'in the highest sense of the term, the greatest melodrama

ever written'.[34] Here, I simply want to note how that novel provides, in its haunting apparition of the woman-in-white herself, one more precedent for the numinous Madeleine in *Vertigo*; and likewise, how the opera-loving, cosmopolitan Count Fosco, whom another critic suggests is 'the most brilliantly portrayed villain in mystery fiction',[35] anticipates aspects of the malevolent Gavin Elster. Crucially, Collins helped pioneer in fiction the type of plot I've referrred to as the 'big lie'.

(v) Clearly, Thomas Mann's 'Der Tod in Venedig'/'Death in Venice' (1913) resembles Jensen's 'Gradiva' in some aspects of basic plot, being about a German man who, on an impulse, makes a springtime journey to an historic seaside city in Italy (Pompeii; Venice) where he becomes obsessed with, and starts to follow around, a classically beautiful figure (the girl Gradiva/Zöe; the Polish boy Tadzio). A direct influence of Jensen's novella on Mann's seems likely, although in the case of Mann (1875-1955), he is said to have drawn on events in his own life which occurred in the summer of 1911 - to the extent that the real-life Tadzio, one Baron Moes, eventually recognised 'himself' in Visconti's superb 1971 film.[36] Also, Mann said that he partly modelled the German writer in his tale on the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler; and the tale overall shows the influence of the thought of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, both of whom Mann admired.[37]

The image of Venice in Mann's tale, like that of San Francisco in *Vertigo*, is ambiguous. Venice is described by Mann as 'half fairy-tale, half-snare'. (I'm reminded of Oscar Wilde's description of San Francisco as a city with 'all the attractions of the next world'.) Thus Aschenbach, the writer in the tale, and very much an Apollonian figure, has always striven in his work to create forms which 'would body forth to men ... the mirror and image of spiritual beauty'. He might be echoing Schopenhauer's notion of great art's capacity to reveal Platonic Ideas - just as one possible function of the many mirrors in *Vertigo* is to show the viewer (Scottie; the film audience) the eternal forms hidden within temporal ones. But now Aschenbach is growing weary, and for him the nearby ocean begins to exert that part of its profound appeal that is almost sensual and 'opposed to his art ... a lure, for the unorganised, the immeasurable, the eternal - in short, for nothingness'. For the artist, to succumb to the eternal is to stop creating, and it is on this ironic note that Mann's tale does in fact end.

Yet one of the great and affecting scenes in fiction - and perhaps in film - is surely Aschenbach's death presided over by a seemingly abandoned camera on a tripod, whose 'black cloth snapped in the freshening wind'. Nearby, the entrancing figure of Tadzio wades into the water, and it seems to the dying man that

> *the pale and lovely Summoner out there smiled at him and beckoned; as though, with the hand he lifted from his hip, he pointed outwards as he hovered on before into an immensity of richest expectation.*

In its way, this is almost Wagnerian, evoking thoughts of 'Tristan und Isolde' and Wagner's own comment on his opera that 'With the black flag that floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die'.[38] Wagner-authority Bryan Magee has no doubt that '*Tristan* really is, ... as it so obviously appears to be, all-engulfingly erotic'.[39] But Magee is equally a Schopenhauer-authority, and he has shown how the end of 'Tristan' was profoundly influenced by Wagner's reading of Schopenhauer.[40] He then makes a comment which I think is pertinent to 'Death in Venice':

> *However, on the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy there is an unresolved problem posed by [Wagner's] work, and it is this: the lovers speak endlessly of unity with each other in death, but they will be united in death only in the sense that they will be united with everything and everybody else, including all the other characters in the opera.*[41]

I think it's possible, and valid, to extrapolate from this the meaning attaching to the camera at the end of 'Death in Venice', and why that ending is problematic. Quite simply, the image of the black-draped camera may be said to stand both for Aschenbach at the moment of his dying - a forlorn enough sight - and for how each of the mundane photos taken by the camera has its own story to tell. (Moreover, the photographer will be back at work tomorrow, and the day after that ...) Can we ever 'know' more than representations? Or, at least, can we ever know that we can know ...? It seems to me likely that Aschenbach's 'relaxed and brooding expression of deep slumber' as he gazes for the last time on the ocean, and on Tadzio's beckoning figure, is again no more than a parody of Schopenhauerian or Nietzschean values. Of true Nirvana.

Something that reinforces my view is Magee's saying that, according to Schopenhauer, only 'compassionate, not sexual, love, a love in which the will is denied', could achieve a true oneness of individuals in this world, the world of phenomena (representations).[42] In 'Death in Venice', we're specificlly told that Aschenbach, a very one-sided man, no Superman in fact, has rejected all 'compassion with the abyss', i.e., the world at large, and that his concern has been 'with beauty only'.

Now I come back to *Vertigo*. Very much the equivalent of Mann's image of the camera is (I suggest) Hitchcock's image of the mother-superior, the nun whose black-clad figure becomes literally one of death when Judy falls from the bell-tower, yet whose valedictory line for the film's characters - 'I heard voices ... God have mercy' - carries the note of Hitchcockian compassion. But Scottie, as we've seen, has rejected compassion, which he seems to think amounts to merely being 'sentimental'.[43] In a film about 'the small stuff of history', and people's brief lives, the nun's words do bring a touch of resignation and Nirvana, but the wilful Scottie is oblivious of it.

The ending of Mann's novella plays on the Schopenhauerian term 'nothingness', an ambiguous concept both in Schopenhauer and in Hitchcock.[44] It's important, I think, to recognise that 'knowledge' (which, however, is still something ...) may take various 'forms', including the Platonic ones mentioned above. So we may indeed know something more than representations, and art offers one means to obtain such knowledge. It's far from being the only means, though. Now, I've deliberately allowed into the present article more than just, say, Freudian matters. And in both 'Death in Venice' and *Vertigo* I see 'Freudian' elements that in fact should probably be understood more broadly. A couple of these are what is often called the oceanic feeling (which Freud paraphrased as the feeling of 'oneness with the universe') and its concomitant notion of the dissolution of the ego. On the first of these Freud corresponded with the French writer and musicologist, Romain Rolland, but professed that he could find no trace of such a feeling in himself. However, he proceeded to characterise it as a regression to an earlier state: that of the infant at the breast. His somewhat dismissive estimation doesn't satisfy psychiatrist and author Anthony Storr, who comments drily that the oceanic feeling 'seems a more important experience than [Freud] admits'.[45] Storr acknowledges that the feeling may indeed be related to early infantile experience of unity with the mother, but he observes:

> *those who have experienced the states of mind recorded by [Admiral] Byrd and by William James record them as having had a permanent effect upon their perception of themselves and of the world; as being the profoundest moments of their existence. This is true both of those who have felt the sense of unity with the universe and of those who have felt the sense of unity with a beloved person.*[46]

However, Storr does note as comparable expressions of the oceanic feeling two moments from works of art, which happen to coincide with two key moments sometimes cited in connection with *Vertigo*: the *Liebestod* from 'Tristan und Isolde' (on which, see above), and the lines commencing 'Darkling I Listen' from Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', which provided the very title of an early script-draft of Hitchcock's film.[47] Though Hitchcock was careful to provide strict narrative or naturalistic reasons for everything he showed (e.g., Judy's 'ghostly' transformation back into Madeleine, the green haze surrounding her ostensibly caused by the neon sign outside the hotel window), it's impossible to doubt that many of the feelings thus filmed came from deep within him.

(vi) A synopsis of the short novel, 'Portrait of Jennie' (1940), by American writer Robert Nathan (1894-?), is included in the useful book 'A Treasury of Literary Masterpieces' (1969), and I must confess to having read only that potted version. But of course I've watched many times the exquisite 1948 film, starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten, to which I'm coming. I want to mention the novella at this point if only because it so obviously belongs with the other novellas already discussed. Also, there's at least one moment in Nathan's story which, though 'Hitchcockian', I don't recall from the film version. Here's an excerpt from the synopsis:

> *One afternoon Jennie appears at [the artist] Eben's studio; she has come to pose. During their conversation, Eben mentions how lost he had been at the time they first met [in Central Park]. Jennie seems upset at the word 'lost'. She says that they couldn't* both *have been lost. On returning to the room after a brief departure, Eben finds Jennie gone. He had not heard the hall door close.*

Jennie's saying that she and Eben couldn't *both* have been lost seems to anticipate the moment in *Vertigo* when Madeleine laughingly tells Scottie that 'Only one [person] is a wanderer - two are always going somewhere'. And the subtle suggestion of Jennie's ghostliness, in the detail about the door, likewise anticipates the several eerie moments in *Vertigo* when Madeleine seems to disappear around corners.

(d) A brief note on 'D'Entre les Morts'

So far is Boileau and Narcejac's novel[48] from being merely 'a squalid exercise in sub-Graham Greenery', as Robin Wood unfairly calls it, that I would venture to suggest that it represents one of the best novels Hitchcock filmed in America - contending in that respect with Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca', Helen Simpson's 'Under Capricorn', and Jack Trevor Story's 'The Trouble With Harry'. Its most obvious progenitor is Georges Simenon's 'Lettre à mon juge' (1947),[49] whose author had been extolled by Narcejac in his study, 'Le Cas "Simenon"' (1950). Moreover, nothing

could be further from the truth than claims by Wood and others that 'Hitchcock took very little from "D'Entre les Morts" apart from the basic plot line'.

For instance, Wood says that 'the novel offers no equivalent for the sequoias [scene]' in the film. Not only do Flavières (the Scottie character) and Madeleine visit the Forêt de Fontainebleau (Part I, Chapter 4), although this is just mentioned, but a key scene soon follows that takes place in the Louvre. Here, the couple pass 'through a dark entrance' to where they saunter 'among Egyptian gods in the coolness of a cathedral', and they converse on the very matters that Scottie and Madeleine raise in the film's Sequoia forest. Finally, Flavières and Madeleine leave the building and find themselves, 'somewhat breathless, in front of a lawn in the middle of which a sprinkler was shedding a rainbow'. (As Scottie and Madeleine leave the forest, the impression given is indeed that of their emerging from a cathedral into the light, a moment soon followed by the scene on the clifftop with its piece of overt romanticism, the crashing waves.)

Moreover, Flavières now begins to feel the same 'peaceful exhaustion he had known as a boy when he had been running the whole day along the banks of the Loire'. I'd make two observations here. First, that childhood haunt includes some ancient caves, which the novel repeatedly mentions as a place of mystery and of the earth. At one point (Part II, Chapter 4) Flavières is reminded of how Christ's body had lain in such a cave before the Resurrection, which connects with the novel's frequent references to how Orpheus had tried to bring back Eurydice from the underworld. Second, Flavières' 'peaceful exhaustion' is part of a pattern in the novel whereby he is simultaneously drawn to, and repelled by, a peculiar passivity in Madeleine which he sees as being like that of animals, which 'have no pasts and no futures' (Part I, Chapter 5). For what this signifies, we need only look at a reference in the novel's first chapter.

The novel's equivalent of Gavin Elster is the prospering shipbuilder, Gévigne (prospering, because it's wartime and ships are in demand). When Gévigne mentions his wife's troubling recent behaviour, in which she suddenly appears to enter a trance and her face becomes like a 'mystic's', he refers Flavières to 'a German film called *Jacob Boehme* we saw at the *Ursulines* back in the 'twenties' (Part I, Chapter 1). The reference to the mystic Boehme (1575-1624) is a key to the novel and, to some extent, Hitchcock's film. Not only had Boehme hoped, as part of a general reformation of Christendom, to reunite Protestants and Catholics, but his writings influenced later thinkers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany and other groups and individuals like the Quakers and William Blake in England. Importantly for what I've been trying to show in this article, Boehme taught that 'will' is the original force.[50] Also, that

> *Man must die to self-centredness and enter a state of total surrender ... In this state he is 'reborn'. For Boehme ... rebirth is at the heart of all processes, both in man and in the universe.*[51]

But sadly for Flavières, another of the novel's themes is more pessimistic. It's true that he twice seems to come close to being 'reborn': first, when he almost possesses Madeleine, his eternal-feminine figure; and again, when he starts to re-model Madeleine's look-alike, Renée, as if he were an artist 'painting the portrait of the Madeleine he remembered' (Part II, Chapter 4). But, like Hans Castorp in Mann's 'The Magic Mountain', he finally isn't good enough. (Literary scholar Frederick Hoffmann has noted how Hans Castorp, a trainee shipbuilder, becomes for the time he spends in the Swiss sanatorium, 'a student, an intellectual, *almost an artist*' - my emphasis - but then returns to the lowlands and a conventional young-man's death on the battlefield.)[52] In *Vertigo*, the failed artistic aspirations are given to Midge, but the implication concerning Scottie himself is clear.

As for Protestants versus Catholics, such a theme is just detectable in Hitchcock's film where I take it that Scottie (whose real name is John Ferguson) is a (Scottish Lowland) Protestant who finds himself at variance, so to speak, with the film's omnipresent Catholic iconography and the yet more exotic, almost at times non-human, passivity of Madeleine.

(e) Some cinema sources of *Vertigo*

For convenience, these can be listed as German, British, French, and American - though the distinction isn't clear-cut, as we'll see.

(i) The influence of German Expressionism on *Vertigo* has often been remarked, and is anticipated in the Boileau and Narcejac novel when it refers to a German film seen in the '20s (although, as far as I know, '*Jacob Boehme*' is purely an invented film-title). Similarly, Lotte Eisner's book about such German films, 'L'Ecran Démoniaque'/ 'The Haunted Screen', first published in France in 1952, contains several entries on a kind of psychological vertigo. As for the actual 'vertigo' effect in Hitchcock's film, it's basically just a more elaborate subjective effect than the one used by E.A. Dupont in *Variety* (1925) and then re-worked by Hitchcock in the circus climax of *Murder!* (1930). And German Expressionism's emphasis on mother-figures, remarked by Siegfried Kracauer in 'From Caligari to Hitler' (1947), is echoed in Hitchcock's film in some scenes with Midge. Specifically, Kracauer mentions the films *The Street* (1923) and

New Year's Eve (1923), in both of which a man breaks down and rests his head on a woman's bosom, a gesture signifying 'desire to return to the maternal womb'.[53] It's like the gesture seen in *Vertigo* when Scottie collapses off the kitchen-stool into Midge's arms.

(ii) When Madeleine describes her dream of 'walking down a long corridor that once was mirrored', she is echoing imagery and indeed the title of a little-known British film, *The Corridor of Mirrors* (Terence Young, 1948). But it's likely that Hitchcock had seen the film: for a start, it contains several Hitchcockian elements, among them a jealous housekeeper (like those of *Rebecca* and *Under Capricorn*) and a suitably macabre climax set in Madame Tussaud's (like the one in Mrs Belloc Lowndes's 'The Lodger'). The very plot shows more than a passing resemblance to *Vertigo*'s, being about an artist obsessed with a Venetian woman in a 400-years-old portrait, whose living double he encounters in present-day London and makes his mistress. In *Under Capricorn*, which Hitchcock filmed in England after Young's film came out, Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman) is described by Adare (Michael Wilding) as both a 'work of art' and a 'reincarnation'.

Moreover, the corridor and mirror imagery of Young's film has a distinctly Cocteauesque look, which is literally underscored by Georges Auric's music, and reminds you of Hitchcock's admiration for Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète/The Blood of a Poet* (1932).[54] Such imagery in *Vertigo* is ubiquitous - even the famous shot down the bell-tower is a corridor image. It's evoked, too, in the smallest details, such as Madeleine's memory of having once fallen into a river, 'trying to leap from one stone to the next'. That image conflates Cocteau's/Young's idea of a fraught corridor with the memorable image of the stepping-stones in 'Gradiva'. But underlying it is Madeleine's fear, which she tells Scottie, of the darkness outside the corridor and her knowledge 'that when I [finally] walk into the darkness that I'll die'.

British director Noel Langley effectively helped 'licence' Hitchcock to make *Vertigo* when in 1956 he went to Hollywood and filmed a 'true' story of reincarnation, *The Search for Bridey Murphy*, starring Teresa Wright, which caught the public's imagination. But of course Hitchcock's own fascination with such material had begun long ago - as far back as 1920 - when he attended the original London stage production of James Barrie's mystical 'Mary Rose' whose title-character lives in and out of time and whose mother has cause to wonder, 'where is my child?' ...[55]

(iii) In an article on Belgian director Jacques Feyder, author and critic Peter Cowie refers to an influential film made by Feyder for Films de France, *Le Grand Jeu/The Great Game* (1933). The Foreign Legion story is set mainly in Morocco, and the actress Marie Bell plays two different women. Here's Cowie:

> *The film's device of having a man haunted by the vision of a blonde woman he loved, and seeing her materialize in subtly changed guise as a brunette, would be used subsequently by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac for the novel that became the basis of Hitchcock's* Vertigo.[56]

But Cowie doesn't indicate how the alleged influence on the novel occurred. It may have been indirectly. In 1953, *Le Grand Jeu* was remade as a Franco-Italian co-production directed by Robert Siodmak (who had once shared a producer with Hitchcock, remember). The new film starred Gina Lollobrigida (with first *red* hair, then black), and was in colour. More than likely, it was the remake that Boileau and Narcejac saw just before they wrote their novel. Another film they may have seen at that time was Henri Verneuil's *Le Fruit Défendu/Forbidden Fruit*, adapted from Simenon's 'Lettre à mon juge' and starring Fernandel in a non-comedy role. It came out in 1952.[57]

In the original *Le Grand Jeu*, actor Charles Vanel had a supporting role. As we've noted, Vanel would later play Bertani in *To Catch a Thief*. In 1938 he was seen in the French film *Carrefour*, directed by Curtis Bernhardt. Like Siodmak (and Hitchcock), Bernhardt had earlier worked in Germany. He and Vanel now co-operated to make one of the touchstone 'big lie' films, which may well have influenced 'D'Entre les Morts' and *Vertigo*. Briefly, the plot of *Carrefour* concerns amnesia. The film's evil mastermind (Vanel) learns of a diplomat who has lost part of his memory, and sees in this an opportunity for blackmail. He employs an elderly actress to impersonate the diplomat's mother who will convince him that he has committed a crime. When Hollywood remade the film in 1942, as *Crossroads*, it had William Powell as victim, and Basil Rathbone as villain. Parallels with *Vertigo* include the mastermind figure (whose origins lie in melodrama and its mutation, German Expressionism),[58] and the attempt to take advantage of a man's infirmity by means of an elaborate hoax, the 'big lie'. In *Vertigo*, Judy imitates the real Madeleine, whom Gavin has murdered; and an elderly lady, presumably a paid actress, compounds the subterfuge by playing the 'innocent' landlady of the McKittrick Hotel.

(iv) If there's one American film that is the progenitor of *Vertigo*, that film is *Portrait of Jennie* adapted from the Robert Nathan novella by German expatriate director William Dieterle. It was made at the Selznick studio in 1947, at about the time Hitchcock was filming *The Paradine Case* there. Hitchcock already admired Dieterle's work to the point of

imitation (the umbrellas scene in *Foreign Correspondent*). On seeing *Portrait of Jennie*, he would have noticed how Jennie resembles Mary Rose, a girl who lives in and out of time. But Dieterle's haunting film and *Vertigo* have other correspondences. For instance, both move towards a tragic climax involving a tower. And both are memorable for their sea-imagery. Further, the films' similarity is underlined by the fact that composer Bernard Herrmann worked on both. (For Dieterle, though, Herrmann composed just 'Jennie's Song' - while Dimitri Tiomkin, the film's official composer, adapted various themes of Debussy, including passages from 'La Mer'.)

Another fine American film of the '40s, showing indebtedness to Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940), is Lewis Allen's ghost tale, *The Uninvited* (1944). Set on the coast of Cornwall and Devon, it anticipates *Vertigo* by referring to a Spanish ancestor (Carmel, instead of Carlotta), to the *Liebestod* from 'Tristan und Isolde' (a rather sardonic touch this time), and to the sea as a place 'of life and death and eternity, too'. But what is certainly the most direct link to *Vertigo* is seen when the haunted heroine, played by Gail Russell, breaks away from her would-be protector (Ray Milland) and runs toward the nearby cliff-edge, clearly intending to commit suicide at the very place where she had been told her mother threw herself over. The spot is marked by a single, gnarled tree - a tree identical to the one we see in Hitchcock's film when Madeleine breaks away from Scottie and runs towards the cliff-edge ...

There are many such 'quotes' in *Vertigo*, and here are some more. When Scottie throws down several cushions before his fire and invites Madeleine to make herself comfortable, the moment recalls a famous scene early in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932), the first film of Katherine Hepburn. The film's producer, David Selznick, afterwards described the scene as having given him 'one of the greatest experiences I've ever had'.[59] (The film was directed by George Cukor from the play by 'Clemence Dane'/Winifred Ashton, who co-wrote the novel on which Hitchcock's *Murder!* was based.)

In 1940 Hitchcock directed a few scenes in the San Francisco movie *The House Across the Bay* when regular director Archie Mayo fell ill. As one of its characters is an aircraft engineer, perhaps a memory of that film occurred to Hitchcock apropos the moment in *Vertigo* when Midge mentions a new type of brassière designed by 'an aircraft engineer down the peninsula'. But there's another possibility: as is well known, aircraft magnate and movie tycoon Howard Hughes once attempted to design a seamless bra for Jane Russell ...

Undoubtedly, Hitchcock and scriptwriter Samuel Taylor looked at various San Francisco movies before making their own. One that certainly impressed them was George Stevens's *I Remember Mama* (1948) in which Barbara Bel Geddes plays Katrin, the film's narrator, who is first seen in the attic of her immigrant-family's house, where she has just finished typing her first novel. Her window looks out upon the city. In other words, this artistically-inclined spinster is a prototype for Midge. Indeed, it looks as if Hitchcock and Taylor noted and deliberately re-used some of Bel Geddes's mannerisms, such as when in the earlier film Katrin ventures to criticise a patrician doctor (a bearded Rudy Vallee) and then blushes in confusion at her temerity. The corresponding moment in *Vertigo* comes, of course, when Midge suggests to Scottie's doctor in the sanatorium that the use of Mozart as therapy 'isn't going to help at all'.

Underlining the connection between the two films, actress Ellen Corby, the landlady of *Vertigo*'s McKittrick Hotel, appears in *I Remember Mama* as, even then, a wiry old maid - who aspires to marry an undertaker. Leslie Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' says that Corby specialised 'in nosey neighbours and prim spinsters'.

Anatole Litvak's vehicle for Bette Davis and Errol Flynn, *The Sisters* (1938), features the San Francisco earthquake at its climax and has an earlier scene in which actress Lee Patrick plays Davis's empty-headed neighbour whom we hear incessantly chattering - until the soundtrack fades her voice and we see that Davis has just received a note from her husband (Flynn) saying he has left her. Similar use of the soundtrack occurs in *Vertigo*, and for an identical reason: to silence Lee Patrik, this time playing the woman at the Brocklebank Apartments whom Scottie asks about her car. Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' describes Patrik as 'the archetypal flibbertijibbet'.[60]

We've already encountered in this article director Vincent Sherman whose *All Through the Night* may have inspired the auction-gallery episode in *North by Northwest*. Sherman's *Nora Prentiss* (1947) is basically set in San Francisco though it's said to be part-based on two British murder cases (presumably the Rouse and Crippen cases). Several moments anticipate *Vertigo*, including the one when the lovers (Ann Sheridan and Kent Smith) head out of town. Feeling suddenly happy, the Smith character announces their destination as 'anywhere you like' - the same fate-sealing line the *Vertigo* script gives Scottie just before Judy dons her earrings and the couple drive away for the last time. (Jewellery serving as a giveaway is itself a detail taken from the Crippen case.)

Finally, I want to say something more about the work of directors Robert Siodmak and Curtis Bernhardt. In 1946 they both made films in Hollywood about twin sisters, i.e., look-alike women, respectively *The Dark Mirror* (with Olivia de Havilland) and *A Stolen Life* (with Bette Davis). The latter film, especially, anticipates *Vertigo* by having a scene set in

an apartment store where Glenn Ford asks the 'good' sister - who secretly loves him - to try on a dress which he is thinking of giving to his wife, the 'bad' sister. The audience is acutely aware of the woman's discomfort and the man's insensitivity, a situation that obviously prefigures the *Vertigo* scenes where Judy is made over by Scottie.

Given these two directors' similarity of background (earlier work in Germany and France) and apparent shared predilection for certain themes and subjects (including crime dramas), their eventual co-operation on a project is hardly surprising: as we've already seen, Bernhardt's *Conflict* was based on a story co-written by Siodmak (with Alfred Neumann). This is the film where Bogart, who has murdered his wife, is tricked by psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet into a confession. It's a good example of the 'big lie' story, like *Carrefour* which Bernhardt had made in France before the War. We've seen how it anticipated a scene in *North by Northwest*; now let's see how it anticipates a scene in *Vertigo*.

The basis of Greenstreet's scheme is that Bogart must be made to think that his wife has come back from the dead or, at any rate, never died. In the street one day, Bogart thinks he sees his wife walk by, wearing her customary green outfit, and he follows her into a building where she enters an upstairs flat. At this point a landlady blocks Bogart's way, saying how that particular flat is vacant and is always kept locked. Bogart protests, so she leads him upstairs - where the flat indeed proves to be empty. Thus the scene anticipates the McKittrick Hotel episode in *Vertigo*, where Ellen Corby plays the seemingly guileless landlady, just as it harks back to *Carrefour*, where an elderly actress impersonates the amnesiac diplomat's mother.

Presumably, in the case of the *Vertigo* episode, it represents a trick engineered by Gavin Elster to make Scottie become even more obsessed with the mysterious Madeleine.[61] Such a playing on a character's infirmity (amnesia, acrophobia) is itself a characteristic of these films. To end on, then, here's a more general example of a film anticipating *Vertigo*. Robert Siodmak's *The Great Sinner* (1949) is loosely based on an aspect of Dostoyevsky, and stars Gregory Peck as a man effectively held captive in the Wiesbaden casino by his new-found mania for gambling. With beginner's luck he wins a fortune, but, as the casino's wily proprietor had foreseen, soon loses it again. Later he is visited in the casino grounds by the apparition of another victim who says, in effect, 'I told you so'. In all of this I see not so much a set of direct parallels with *Vertigo* as a significant general ambience common to several such films. For instance, gambling or infatuation or vertigo itself are recurrent expressionist or *noir* motifs. When Peck finds out his weakness for gambling, it's like the moment when Scottie, clinging to a San Francisco rooftop, suddenly finds out he suffers from acrophobia. And when Peck wins a fortune only to lose it, this isn't very different from how Scottie 'wins' Madeleine from death and then loses her. As for the wily proprietor, he of course may be found in German films of the '20s (and Hitchcock's *Spellbound*), as well as making common cause with all the other mastermind figures we've noted. Above all, as the ghostly apparition in the casino grounds could testify, what these various films most share is perhaps their general sense of worldly entrapment - a snare disguised as a fairy-tale.

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Notes

1. A Trodd, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Moonstone' (World's Classics, 1982), p. xiii. Hitchcock's actress daughter Patricia was heard in a radio production of 'The Moonstone' on 16 November, 1953. See Martin Grams Jr, "Murder and *Suspense*: Hitchcock's Established reputation", on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web site.
2. S. Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of *Psycho*' (1991), p. 20.
3. J. Basinger, entry on Robert Siodmak, in 'The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers', Vol. 2 (Directors/Filmmakers) (1987), p. 502.
4. While Siodmak's *The File on Thelma Jordan* evidently borrows from Hitchcock's *The Paradine Case*, even in matters of casting (Joan Tetzel appears in both films), Bernhardt's *High Wall* (1947) seems indebted in matters of plot and characters to Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (though Audrey Totter is no Ingrid Bergman).
5. Entry on Dieterle in L. Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' (all editions).
6. I discount as a major influence on Hitchcock's 'umbrellas' scene the relatively static scene in Sam Woods's *Our Town* (1940) of a funeral in the rain, as suggested in the monograph 'Thames Television's The Art of Hollywood: Fifty Years of Art Direction' (n.d.), pp. 95-96. Nonetheless, Hitchcock probably did see Woods's film, on which William Cameron Menzies worked before turning to *Foreign Correspondent*.
7. Peter Wollen alluded to the relevance of Freud's essay to *Vertigo* in "Hitchcock's Vision", 'Cinema' (UK), No. 3, June 1969, pp. 2-4. Donald Chankin's "Delusions and Dreams in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*" appeared in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1993 edition, just before the present article was first published in 'MacGuffin' 11.
8. Obviously, the story and setting of *Last Year at Marienbad* suggest a persuasion that is also an exhumation and an unfreezing. It ends with X's voice intoning: 'It seemed, at first glance, impossible to get lost here ... at first glance ... down straight paths, between the statues with frozen gestures and the granite slabs, where you were now already getting lost, forever, in the calm night, alone with me.' In 'MacGuffin' 15, I drew some parallels between *Marienbad* and *Spellbound*, including between the respective films' endings.
9. See P. French, "Alfred Hitchcock: The Film-maker as Englishman and exile", in 'Sight and Sound', Spring 1985, pp. 116-22.
10. I'm thinking of course of the resemblance between Zoe's disappearance and her reappearance between two yellow columns and Madeleine's disappearance in the Sequoia forest and her reappearance between two trees.
11. Cf. V. Burgin, "Diderot, Barthes, *Vertigo*", in V. Burgin, J. Donald, and C. Kaplan, eds, 'Formations of Fantasy' (1986), pp. 85-108. Accompanying the text is an illustration of John Everett Millais's painting, 'Ophelia' (1851), included for comparison with Madeleine's attempted watery suicide in *Vertigo*.
12. S. Freud, "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*", in S. Freud, 'Art and Literature', Vol. 14 of the Pelican Freud Library (1985), p. 103.

13. F. Nietzsche, 'Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One', Part One, Zarathustra's Prologue. Hugely influenced by Nietzsche, of course, is Norman O. Brown, 'Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History' (Sphere Books edition, 1968), which includes the following: 'psychoanalysis suggests the eschatological proposition that mankind will not put aside its sickness and its discontent until it is able to abolish every dualism'. (Chapter IV, p. 55)
14. "Nietzsche: Dialogue with J.P. Stern", in B. Magee, 'The Great Philosophers' (1987), p. 236. Professor Stern adds: '[Nietzsche's] reason for being against [compassion] lay in his fundamental appeal to authenticity, to selfhood, to the *élan vital*, to the life within the person lived to the full. It is this person, who should be living life to the full, whom the need for pity and compassion dishonours, who is diminished by compassion.'
15. Ibid, p. 245.
16. Translated in S. Gottlieb, ed., 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' (1995), pp. 142-45.
17. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (Penguin Books edition, 1991), pp. 254-55.
18. In Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963), no fewer than three different women utter this same line.
19. J. Jacobi, 'The Psychology of C.G. Jung' (1968), p. 124.
20. Paglia, p. 257.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid, p. 256.
23. D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 39.
24. Ibid. (Spoto is using his own translation of the article "Pourquoi J'ai Peur la Nuit".)
25. K. Miller, 'Doubles' (1987), pp. 154-66.
26. See Schopenhauer's Appendix, "Criticisms of the Kantian Philosophy", to his 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. 1. Schopenhauer adds 'that Kant's teaching gives us the insight that the beginning and end of the world are to be sought not without us, but rather within.'
27. Paglia, p. 573. Paglia adds that Ligeia 'defies God's law of mortality because she, not he, is the resurrection and the life'.
28. Marina Warner's splendid study of fairy tales, 'From the Beast to the Blonde' (1994), notes that besides being associated with beauty and erotic attraction, value and fertility, the luminosity of blonde hair linked it to virginity (p. 367). That's a good Hitchcockian paradox! Warner continues: 'After the fifteenth century, the Virgin Mary herself ... is frequently depicted as a blonde.'
29. Cf. note 27 above. It's interesting to compare the original *Vertigo* novel, where the Scottie character, Flavières, upbraids himself for losing Madeleine: 'It was will-power he lacked. ... He would have had to pour out far more vitality than he possessed to keep her in this world.' (Part I, Chapter Six - the G. Sainsbury translation.)
30. D. Coward, Introduction to A. Dumas *fils*, 'La Dame aux Camélias' (World's Classics, 1986), p. xix. This novel has a strong tinge of necrophilia, a fact which may also have been in Hitchcock's and/or screenwriter Sam Taylor's mind when they were preparing *Vertigo*.
31. Plus the whole Pirandellian element of the film, with its various levels of 'performance' watched by us as well as by Scottie.
32. A. Martin, "Reading *Notorious*", in 'Filmviews' (Melbourne), No. 119, April 1984, p. 9.
33. Quoted in N.P. Hurley, 'Soul in Suspense' (1993), p. 293.
34. H.P. Sucksmith, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Woman in White' (World's Classics, 1973), p. xx.
35. A Peterson, 'Victorian Masters of Mystery' (1984), p. 46.
36. This dramatic moment was recounted by film critic Gilbert Adair in an English Sunday newspaper in 1990. It's possible, though, that it isn't wholly accurate. Monica Stirling, in her study of Visconti, 'A Screen of Time' (1979), pp. 214-15, gives a different version of events: 'About ten years after Thomas Mann's death [in 1955], his daughter Erika received a letter from an elderly Polish nobleman, Count Vladislav Moes, saying that friends had recently given him the Polish translation of a novella in which he himself, his sisters, all his family were minutely described.' But it seems that Count Moes was 'not in the least offended'.
37. Cf. note 52 below. Mann, of course, was another author influenced by the Faust theme (as was Oscar Wilde when he wrote 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', a work that, according to Spoto, Hitchcock read 'several times').
38. Quoted in B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 355.
39. Ibid, p. 363.
40. Ibid, pp. 354-63.
41. Ibid, p. 363.
42. Ibid, pp. 363-64. Mind you, as Magee adds, 'Wagner was aware of this inconsistency with Schopenhauer's teaching, and he considered it was a point on which Schopenhauer was wrong ... that sexual love is also a way in which the will can be led to self-awareness and self-denial'.
43. Scottie, in Midge's words, is 'the hard-headed Scot'. Another Scotsman, Sir Kenneth Clark, says in his 'Civilisation' (1969), p. 182, that 'The Scottish character ... shows an extraordinary combination of realism and reckless sentiment' - a remark which tells a good deal about Scottie. But sentiment is not sentimentality, and it's the latter of which Scottie, for whatever reason, is so suspicious. Actually, as I suggest in the text, I think Scottie lacks both sentimentality (as usually understood) *and* compassion - though clearly his attempt to re-create Madeleine in Judy represents a form of sentimentality on a grand scale.
44. The famous last paragraph of Volume I of 'The World as Will and Representation', Schopenhauer's magnum opus, observes: 'That we abhor nothingness so much is simply another way of saying that we will life so much, and that we are nothing but this will and know nothing but it alone [because all of our being and knowledge are but an expression of willing].' But in true 'ocean-like calmness of the spirit', in a Nirvana-state of self-denial, Schopenhauer tells us, may lie an individual's only redemption short of death itself from the world's woes and suffering. Naturally a Hitchcock film advocates no such course; nonetheless, many of the films, including *Vertigo*, seem to me to pivot on just such an insight into the nature of the world and of willing as Schopenhauer shows in the above passage. Significantly, *North by Northwest* (1959) almost lampoons several of the themes that inform *Vertigo*. The brash, shallow, instinctive Roger Thornhill experiences a series of events that make him exclaim, 'I never felt more alive!' He freely avows, though, that he's only interested in 'the art of survival' - *mere* life. On the other hand, the urbane, cultured, considerate Vandamm is clearly a true art-lover and *thinker*, not without a touch of world-weariness (and is associated wrth things Eastern - the oriental statuette containing microfilm). Just as Scottie's final ascent of the bell-tower in *Vertigo* proves a hollow triumph, so Thornhill's 'triumph' at the end of *North by Northwest*, which even puts him on top of that national monument, Mount Rushmore, doesn't go unquestioned.
45. A Storr, 'The School of Genius' (1988), p. 38. Storr notes: 'Freud is not impressed with Rolland's claim that the oceanic feeling is the source of religious sentiments. Freud claimed that man's need for religion originated with the infant's sense of helplessness ...'. How Nietzschean!
46. Ibid.
47. D. Auiler, '*Vertigo*: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic' (1998), p. 34. Auiler notes that Maxwell Anderson's script-draft, 'Darkling, I Listen', was completed in September 1956.
48. Translated into English by G. Sainsbury as 'The Living and the Dead'.
49. See my article, "Engendering the Truth about *Vertigo*", in 'MacGuffin' 17 for a detailed comparison of Simenon's novel and Hitchcock's film.
50. See the entry on Boehme in M. Drabble, ed., 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature' (1985). Norman O. Brown's 'Life Against Death' frequently cites Boehme in the context of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, et al. For example: 'Boehme conceived of God's life as it is in itself as play. Eternity is the mode of play.' (Chapter VIII, p. 91) Cf. note 13 above.
51. H. Popper, "Jacob Boehme", in R. Cavendish, ed., 'Man, Myth and Magic' (1970), p. 302.

52. F.J. Hoffmann, 'Freudianism and the Literary Mind' (1959), p. 212. Hoffmann says that Hans Castorp's stay in the sanatorium frees him from 'bourgeois time' and 'directs his attention inward'; and that 'Mann, from his reading of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and his observation of the powerful effect of Wagner's music, participates in the nineteenth-century romantic-irrational revolt against the sanctity of consciousness'.
53. See, in particular, illustration 22, and accompanying caption, in Kracauer's book (Noonday edition, 1959). There's a good, long chapter on German Silent Films in T. Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992), pp. 288-354.
54. See, for example, the essay already mentioned, "Why I Am Afraid of the Dark", in Gottlieb, p. 144.
55. Hitchcock recounts the plot of 'Mary Rose' to Truffaut in their interview. For more on the play and Hitchcock's feelings about it, see Spoto, pp. 474-75 and passim, and Auiler, p. 47 and p. 140.
56. P. Cowie, "An unfading talent: Jacques Feyder", in 'The Movie' (1982), p. 2403.
57. I discuss Verneuil's film in my article on *Vertigo* in 'MacGuffin' 17. Cf. note 49 above.
58. Cf. E. Bentley, 'The Life of the Drama' (1969), p. 214.
59. Quoted in R. Behlmer, 'Memo From: David O. Selznick' (Avon pb, 1973), p. 74.
60. See also Auiler, p. 76.
61. Actor Tom Helmore, who plays Elster, thus corresponds to Charles Vanel in *Carrefour* (and Basil Rathbone in *Crossroads*) and Sydney Greenstreet in *Conflict*. Greenstreet wasn't actually an *evil* mastermind-figure in *Conflict*, though. But he was certainly that when he played Count Fosco in Peter Godfrey's 1948 film of *The Woman in White*!

Brief critique of the above article, by its author

To begin on a fairly positive note, I would have to say that "Fragments of the Mirror", in its revised form, is a better article than Royal Brown's "*Vertigo* as Orphic Tragedy" (1986)![1] Picking up on references to Eurydice in the Boileau and Narcejac novel, Brown tried to show that *Vertigo* is essentially a rigorous reworking of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth - and seemingly little else! To me, that epitomises the sort of prosaic single-vision that continues to inform much academic writing on Hitchcock, and which flies directly in the face of the rich allusiveness that *Vertigo* actually offers the viewer.

The trouble is, very few critics and scholars - myself among them - are capable of the full four-fold vision that poet William Blake equated with a total grasp of reality, and which *Vertigo* (not so far removed from the spirit of Blake, after all) surely asks us to bring to it.[2] In many ways, I'm as dissatisfied with my own article as I am with Brown's.

There's little in my article on the sheer facility of Hitchcock's filmmaking craft. Such matters might be said to lie outside the scope of an article on 'sources', but I know that readers still want to hear about them! In fact, someone like Martin Scorsese has taught us that in matters of craft lie the essence of filmmaking, and of course he's right. Fortunately, Dan Auiler's book '*Vertigo*: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic' (with foreward by Scorsese) is now available. It can give deep insights into Hitchcock's artistry. Here's one example. Though the remarkable scene of Judy's final transformation into Madeleine was achieved with hardly any re-takes, it had been preceded by much experimentation involving the use of a stand-in for Kim Novak. On that occasion, nine different takes of the green-light effect in Judy's bedroom were made, with slight variation each time to create the striking green silhouette of Judy when Scottie sees here at her window. Judy's actual emergence from the bathroom as Madeleine was filmed just three times, including one time when less green light was used.[3] Auiler's account also indicates the importance of Scottie's close-up here (his 'longing and expectation ... are painfully visible and real'), and adds, for good measure, Kim Novak's truly acute comment that the scene 'was the ultimate defining moment of anybody when they're going to someone they love and they just want to be perfect for them'. (Aulier, pp. 111, 116-17)

So what is my main criticism of my article? That is, apart from its failure to give an intimate account of the actual *feel* and *working* of the film? I suppose the answer to that is the irrelevance at one level of the reference to Thomas Mann's 'Der Tod in Venedig'. There's not the slightest evidence that Hitchcock had read Mann's novella. And yet, I felt strongly that the Mann material *should* go into the article, and even as am I'm writing this I see more clearly why that was so. For one thing, the sense of longing that's clearly experienced in the story by Aschenbach for the boy Tadzio is simply the nearest equivalent I know to Scottie's longing in the film for Madeleine! To fully justify what I've just said would take paragraphs. But basically, if we're talking of artistic influence, it does seem wise to me to allow that such works as Mann's and Hitchcock's may *both* spring from a common allegiance to Romanticism and all that such allegiance entails. For example: a longing for the infinite.

Anyway, that's one criticism - and defence - that I'd make of my article. Another is this. No sooner had I posted a draft of the article on the Web recently, and invited constructive comment, than someone simply asked, 'so?' Which would seem to indicate that what the article says is less than self-evidently worthwhile! That is, I've failed to give it a sense of purposiveness. I had hoped that I'd hit upon a way of showing how a filmmaker's creativity seldom proceeds *ex nihilo* though at the same time it may be richly resourceful in ways that an uninformed viewer wouldn't suspect. How many viewers, indeed, would know of the film *Corridor of Mirrors* and thus how Hitchcock seems to have fully

understood its relevance to his own project, which accommodates it in all kinds of ways, including using images of both corridors and mirrors throughout? (Memo to myself: need to fully spell out and justify what you're writing about!)

That brings me to another of my dissatisfactions with my article: it's forever proving incomplete! Let me illustrate. First, as I was reading Rhona J. Berenstein's perceptive 1992 article on *Rebecca*[4] the other day, I was reminded that Hitchcock had placed Manderley's doorknobs 'at a height which makes [Joan] Fontaine look child-like in her attempts to turn them'.[5] Immediately, I recognised where that idea of Hitchcock's probably came from: namely, from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking-Glass'! That added a fresh slant to Hitchcock's remark to Truffaut that *Rebecca* borrows from 'Cinderella' and also from Pinero's 'His House in Order'. But then I remembered that Hitchcock had *Rebecca* in mind when he was making *Vertigo* (Auiler, p. 45). Hence it now seems to me that the middle section of *Vertigo* might be described as being about two people who find themselves trapped in the mundane world and who yearn to visit (or re-visit) a different world on the far side of the looking-glass - though a part of Madeleine senses that all that they may find there is 'darkness'. Well, how poignant! Furthermore, you could easily liken Madeleine and Scottie here to two of Plato's cave-dwellers who have suddenly awakened to the fact that there may be a different, vaster world somewhere above them - an idea that almost certainly influenced Schopenhauer's and hence Nietzsche's respective philosophies ...

And again, just the other day I came across an old note of mine to the effect that Madeleine's line in *Vertigo*, 'Sister Teresa would scold us', comes from Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece, 'Long Day's Journey Into Night' - which proved, when I checked, to have been first published in 1956 and to have had its first US performances later that same year. That's not all. I actually inquired on the 'Film Theory' newsgroup earlier this month about this matter, and was asked by one anonymous respondent (to whom I'm deeply grateful) did I know that the name of O'Neill's wife was Carlotta Monterey O'Neill? The same respondent then quoted from the Gelbs' biography of O'Neill:

> *[Carlotta O'Neill's] final years of loneliness and desperation and her eventual mental collapse were part of the O'Neill scenario. She became, like Mary Tyrone in 'Long Day's Journey Into Night', a ghost haunting the past. There were no happy endings for O'Neill heroines, and Carlotta was the ultimate O'Neill heroine. ...*

Apparently, Carlotta O'Neill, in her final years, believed herself to be in touch with her dead husband's spirit, who would dictate various instructions to her.

None of this information is exactly irrelevant to *Vertigo*! In fact, I'd surmise that screenwriter Sam Taylor and possibly Hitchcock had seen O'Neill's play in New York, and had looked further into O'Neill's life (the play itself is autobiographical, of course, and not incidentally contains much quoting of Schopenhauer, Neitzsche, et al.). And I'd say that *Vertigo*'s Carlotta may well be a composite of the character Carmel from *The Uninvited* and Carlotta Monterey O'Neill. The latter certainly seems to have had much in common with 'the mad Carlotta, the sad Carlotta' of Hitchcock's film.

Dr Tag Gallagher responded to my request for constructive comment on my article with a couple of observations. The first was that I may have misrepresented Nietzsche by suggesting that he was against compassion. But in the article I tried to be clear that Nietzsche was in fact ambivalent about this. Moreover, I'm aware that Hitchcock himself was likewise ambivalent. One part of him was capable of deep compassion and also of deep sentiment. (Hence, I believe, his strong feelings about a play like 'Mary Rose'.) But another part of him evinced a cruel streak, as he himself seems to have recognised when he once told Bernard Herrmann, as they washed dishes at the Hitchcocks' house, that he'd have liked to have been a hanging judge! Donald Spoto gives several instances in his Hitchcock biography of the director's callousness, such as the time he continually plied Montgomery Clift with alcohol, knowing that the result might be dangerous, even fatal, for the (gay) actor. None of this is out of keeping, by the way, with how Schopenhauer characterised all human beings: as a compound of basic ego, malice, and compassion - though these might be present in vastly different proportions in different individuals.

Anyway, I do see Scottie in *Vertigo* as an aspiring Superman figure, as I see Hitchcock himself as having had similar aspirations. (In fact, Tag Gallagher noted to me that Catholics have seldom felt a difficulty in reconciling Nietzsche's philosophy with their faith.)

Tag Gallagher's other criticism of my article was this: that very few Americans think of San Francisco in terms of its past, of its 'colourful history part-destroyed by earthquake and fire, and by the fog of memory itself' (as I say in the article). So I'm again reminded of how my article seems to fail to evoke the actual experience of viewing Hitchcock's great film. Nonetheless, the film *is* about the historical San Francisco as well as the present-day city (as photographed,

that is, in 1957 by cinematographer Robert Burks), and I can't forget that one reason Hitchcock gave for setting his film in that hugely evocative metropolis (see 'MacGuffin' 1) was to have Madeleine turn up in her grey suit 'as if she'd just materialised out of the San Francisco fog' - and all that that implies.

Equally, I'm reminded of Pop Liebel's evocation, in Scottie's words, of 'the small stuff of history', of history's forgotten people (such as those whose lives were snuffed out in the earthquake and fire of 1906). Viewing a recent television documentary about the woman who achieved brief notoriety in New York early this century as 'Typhoid Mary', and who died forgotten years later in a mental home where she'd been consigned (though there was little mentally wrong with her), I felt strong parallels with what presumably befell Carlotta Valdes. Hitchcock's film hints, moreover, that perhaps Midge may die equally forgotten ...

No, if one responds to *Vertigo* at the level of association my article was attempting - and which I believe that the film in its rich immediacy paradoxically invites us to work towards (a level which Hitchcock had clearly felt and researched) - then I'd say that San Francisco's 'historicity' is a vital ingredient of what the film is about ...

I could criticise, as well as critique, my article a good deal further (e.g., for not relating the chthonic, earthy passages of the novel to my analysis of similar material in the film), but I had better stop. My main aim in writing the article was to be relatively concrete, and to show at least some aspects of the film 'as they really are' - as against what I'd say is the general failure to do this of such an abstract and narrow article as Royal Brown's, cited earlier. However, I do ask the reader to forgive both any presumption on my part and my own limited vision ...

- For still more *Vertigo* source-material, see John Sheridan's interesting letter, printed in this issue, concerning 'overlap' of Hitchcock's film with Delmer Daves's *Dark Passage* (1947).

Notes

1. R. S. Brown, "*Vertigo* as Orphic Tragedy", 'Literature/Film Quarterly', Vol. 14, No. 1, 1986, pp. 32-43.
2. I trust that the reader will allow me this metaphorical way of putting things. Blake followed the Cabalistic tradition of four worlds, each representing a state of consciousness. His supreme rebuke to Newton and his materialist philosophy was to cry, 'God us keep/ From Single vision and Newton's sleep.'
3. The following month, an additional take of the green-haze effect was attempted. (Auiler, p. 117)
4. R.J. Berenstein, "'I'm not the sort of person men marry': Monsters, Queers, and Hitchcock's *Rebecca*", 'CineAction', No. 29, Fall 1992, pp. 82-96.
5. I believe that Leonard Leff earlier pointed this out in his 'Hitchcock and Selznick' (1987).

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ODD SPOT: MORE (AND MORE) INFLUENCES

How many Irishmen does it take to replace a light-bulb? We're not sure (we've heard so many variants!), so here's an easier question. How many factors influenced the look of the Bates house in *Psycho* (1960)? Robert Bloch's novel describes it as 'the big frame house on the hillside' whose 'highbacked furniture and paneled fireplace were straight out of the Gay Nineties' (Chapter Three). Hitchcock told Truffaut that the house's setting was northern California and that its architectural style was 'California Gothic' or 'California gingerbread'. And Stephen Rebello's 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of *Psycho*' (1991) notes that Art Directors Joseph Hurley and Robert Clatworthy took the house's front turret from the house used in the James Stewart man-and-his-rabbit comedy *Harvey* (Universal-International, 1950). Now a recent book, 'Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography', by Gail Levin, has confirmed a Rebello hunch: that another influence was Hopper's famous 1925 painting, 'The House by the Railroad', which Hitchcock had seen. As Levin puts it, 'Edward, who had found so much inspiration in literature and the dramatic arts, was beginning to repay the debt.' (She gives the source of her information as Jo Hopper's diary, which in turn cites the New York Evening Post, June 13, 1960, p. 41.)

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 25a | December 1998 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

THOSE OF YOU WHO can access the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' Web site are in for a treat starting immediately. I'm going on a few months' 'leave', and during that time the "Editor's Day" jottings will be contributed by some hugely capable people writing on a miscellany of film-related topics. Those people are: Dan Auiler (author of '*Vertigo*: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic' and compiler/editor of the forthcoming 'Hitchcock's Notebooks'); Adrian Martin (Australia's top film critic, whose BFI monograph on Sergio Leone's *Once a Time in America* has been drawing much praise); and Dr Tag Gallagher (author of the standard work, 'John Ford', and the newly published biography, 'The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini').

Now here's more good news. You will have noticed that this issue of 'The MacGuffin' hasn't as many pages as usual. In point of fact, it's a bonus issue, and *no subscriber will be charged for it*. In other words, instead of four issues in your current subscription, you will receive five.

I simply wanted to publish one more issue before I went on what I've called leave. And the reason for taking that leave is that a few weeks ago I was unexpectedly asked by Titan Books in London to write for them a book called 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story'. So I plan to make myself invisible for a while as I truckle down to some solid work. 'The MacGuffin' will return as soon as possible. Look for it again round about mid-1999.

By the way, I'm sure that parts of the book - which will cover all of Hitch's more than fifty films - will draw at times on material already written up in 'The MacGuffin'. (I'll be thinking of many of you as I work!) But of course there will also be a whole lot of new stuff - and I look forward to being able to tell you something about it when 'The MacGuffin' resumes.

Many thanks to those of you who responded so positively to the Editorial last time. I'm printing in this issue a couple of the letters received about that.

But before you read those, let me share the following relevant thought of Sol Stein, the well-known writer and book editor (whose clients included James Baldwin and Elia Kazan):

> *The writers of thousands of academic articles and books each year, of hundreds of thousands of legal papers and millions of business memoranda, are discourteous to their readers and fail in their purpose. They do not understand the power of language or the techniques for its use.*

That's from 'Stein on Writing' (1995), and I recommend it. It's published by St Martin's Press, New York, who more recently published Dan Auiler's book on *Vertigo* - which I also recommend. The only reason Dan's very professional book isn't reviewed in this issue, as promised in 'MacGuffin' 25, is that I haven't had the time to write the review. But let me say now that I find the book exemplary in its clarity and in the self-effacing way Dan has allowed his material to speak for itself wherever possible.

Okay, now to indicate what else is in this issue. My own article this time is on *Under Capricorn* (1949), the last of the three films that Hitchcock made with Ingrid Bergman. I think the film is masterly. The scene on the wharf at the end, for instance, deserves an analysis to itself. If you know the film, just consider the implications of the snatch of music that poses anew the question, 'Who gives the orders?' However, my article had to be exactly 2,000 words, and I could only pick out a few things to emphasise. I set the 2,000 word figure (and the inclusion in the article's first part of many of the film's production details) because that's what I'm restricted to in my book. A future 'MacGuffin' will have more to say on *Under Capricorn*.

Murray Pomerance, Professor of Film at Ryerson University in Toronto, has spent years teaching and writing about Hitchcock. From an as-yet unpublished book on *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), Murray has sent us part of his elaborate analysis of a key scene, the meal of Arab food shared by the McKennas (James Stewart and Doris Day) and the Draytons (Bernard Miles and Brenda de Banzie) at a restaurant in Marrakesh. Something that underlies the scene's formal surface and sense of more-or-less agreeable 'performance' by all concerned is a hint that civilisation is no more than a veneer. (Compare Schopenhauer: 'There really resides in the heart of each of us a wild beast that only awaits the opportunity to rage and rave ... and destroy.') Indeed, Mr Drayton, who's been an agronomist, comments elsewhere in the film about the African landscape: 'A thin layer of topsoil, and underneath ...' The note of surrealism is what Murray's analysis of the restaurant scene brings out.

Susan Smith obtained her PhD earlier this year at the University of Sunderland, England, with a thesis on Hitchcock. She now teaches there under Deborah Thomas, herself the author of a couple of exemplary articles on Hitchcock for 'CineAction' magazine. Dr Smith contributes to this issue an ingenious deconstruction of Hitchcock's cameo 'performance' in *Lifeboat* (1944), where the director is seen in a newspaper ad for 'Reduco', a dietary drug. The article illuminates the film's persistent note of (wartime) stringency and the need to shed all superfluity. (When you think about it, even the film's political theme is about the need by the Allies to *abandon* their differences.) Though Hitchcock may have had mixed motives for approaching his film in this way, Dr Smith's article, like Murray Pomerance's, helps us to appreciate the film's surrealist bent.

Surrealism in Hitchcock is something touched on by Camille Paglia in her monograph '*The Birds*', reviewed in this issue by Craig Richard Canfield, who lives in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. Craig regularly reviews books for 'The Newark Star Leger'. He deeply admires Paglia's writings but isn't uncritical of one aspect of her recent approach to Hitchcock, concerning precisely the director's 'daemonic' side. Craig quoted to me literary critic Northrop Frye on the 'daemonic erotic'. Frye describes this drive as 'a firece destructive passion that works against loyalty or frustrates the one who possesses it. It is generally symbolized by a harlot, witch, siren, or any other tantalizing female, a physical object of desire which is sought as a possession and therefore can never be possessed'. The repression of the daemon only causes more demons, noted Craig - who sees in Hitchcock's depiction of Melanie Daniels in *The Birds* (1963) just such an attitude to the daemonic. (For my part, I'm reminded again of Schopenhauer, who insisted that we're all a mix of basic ego, malice, and compassion - and undoubtedly very capable of projecting onto others the more negative aspects of that mix.) But, surprisingly, Camille Paglia, who in the past has written so well on such matters, soft-pedals this aspect of *The Birds*.

My thanks to all our contributors and letter-writers this issue.

The Table of Contents for issues 21-24 is held over until next time.

To everyone, good viewing - Ken.

LETTERS

NYU Hitchcock celebration, October 1999
Dr Greg Garrett, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA

I have a tentative program for the New York symposium being chaired by Richard Allen next October - this info below is from an e-mail today.

Web site: http:/www.nyu.edu/tisch/cinema/hitchcock

Hitchcock: A Centennial Celebration
October 13-17, 1999
Dept. of Cinema Studies
Tisch School of the Arts
New York University

Tuesday, Oct 12
8.00 Carnegie Hall Concert with the New York Filmharmonic in a program of Bernard Herrmann's Hitchcock scores.

Wednesday, Oct. 13
1.00-2.15 Conference Registration
2.30-4.45 Film Screening at Cantor Center: *Strangers on a Train* [British version], with Patricia Hitchcock and Farley Granger (in person)
5.00-7.00 Director's Forum: Hitchcock's Legacy, with Jonathan Demme, Brian DePalma, Martin Scorsese, GusVan Sant
8.00-11.00 Formal Dinner in the Ben Snow Dining Room, with Guest Speaker Gregory Peck

Thursday, Oct. 14
9.30-12.00 Plenary Session: Biographical Perspectives, with Dan Aulier, Leonard Leff, Donald Spoto
12.00-1.15 Lunch Break
1.30-3.30 Working with Hitch (I): A Screenwriter's Forum, with Evan Hunter (*The Birds*), Frederick Knott (*Dial M for Murder*), Joseph Stefano (*Psycho*), Samuel Taylor (*Vertigo*, *Topaz*)
4.00-6.00 Working with Hitch (II): An Actor's Forum, with Norman Lloyd, Eve Marie Saint, Sylvia Sydney, Teresa Wright
5.00-7.30 Film Screening at the Director's Guild: *Psycho* [new 35mm print], with Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, Patricia Hitchcock, Joseph Stefano (in person)
8.00-10.30 Film Screening at the Director's Guild: *Psycho* [new 35mm print], with Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, Patricia Hitchcock, Joseph Stefano (in person)

Friday, Oct. 15
8.00-10.00 Panel 1A Panel 1B Panel 1C Panel 1D
10.15-12.45 Plenary Session: Historical Perspectives, with Charles Barr, Paula Marantz Cohen, Robert J. Corber, Andrew Sarris
12.45-2.15 Buffet Lunch at Cantor Center
2.15-4.15 Digital Hitchcock, with Robert Kapsis, Lauren Rabinowitz, Steven Mamber
Panel 2A Panel 2B Panel 2C
4.30-6.30 French Hitchcock, with Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, Jean Douchet
5.00-7.30 Film Screening at Director's Guild: *The Birds* [new 35mm print], with 'Tippi' Hendren, Suzanne Pleshette, Evan Hunter (in person)
8.00-10.30 Film Screening at Director's Guild: *The Birds* [new 35mm print] with 'Tippi' Hendren, Suzanne Pleshette, Evan Hunter (in person)

Saturday, Oct. 16
8.00-10.00 Panel 3A Panel 3B Panel 3C Panel 3D
10.15-12.45 Plenary Session: Critical Perspectives, Part One, with Lesley Brill, Thomas Leitch, Peter Wollen
12.45-2.00 Lunch Break
2.00-4.00 Panel 4A Panel 4B Panel 4C Panel 4D
4.15-6.45 Plenary Session: Theoretical Perspectives, with Raymond Bellour, Lee Edelman, Slavoj Zizek
5.30-8.00 Film Screening: *Rear Window* [Premiere of newly restored 35mm print]
8.30-11.00 Film Screening: *Rear Window* [Premiere of newly restored35mm print]

Sunday, Oct. 17
8.00-10.00 Panel 5A Panel 5B Panel 5C Panel 5D
10.15-12.45 Plenary Session: Critical Perspectives, Part Two, with Laura Mulvey, James Naremore, William Rothman, Robin Wood
12.45-2.00 Lunch Break
2.00-4.30 Film Screening at Director's Guild: *Vertigo* [new 35mm print], with Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, Samuel Taylor (in person)
5.00-7.00 Closing Reception

* * *

'MacGuffin' 25
Dr Nandor Bokor, Universirty of Technology, Budapest, Hungary

1. About your Editorial: I very honestly think that the present form of the magazine (being neither a chat-group publication nor an *unintelligible* pseudo-scientific paper) is perfect. Of course, you have to take into account the fact that I'm not a film scholar myself; on the other hand, I most certainly don't consider myself a stupid person. And I'm

very grateful to you for trying to 'continue to write "The MacGuffin" in as concrete a style, using minimal jargon', as you can manage!

2. Just a remark about the book review. It seems to me that ['Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality'] is a book which it would exhaust me to read and which would provide few really illuminating thoughts as a compensation. (I agree with J. Lary Kuhns's comments.) But a humble question: you seem to agree with Robert Samuels that Alex in *Notorious* is 'clearly bisexual' (p.9, second para.). Could you explain to me why it is so obvious? It's not obvious to me at all.

3. Your *Vertigo* article, on the other hand, was crystal clear, it was perceptive, and it contained many things that were revelations for me. I haven't read the original version of the essay, so I don't exactly know the nature and extent of the corrections. But in the present form, it is a truly wonderful essay, one that is absolutely worth reading, because it gives you many new things. As I am leafing through it now, I am getting excited again! Practically, there isn't a single sentence in it which I couldn't agree with (including the parts where you agree with Freud, and other parts where you criticize him)! A minor remark I would make is that - according to my memory - it isn't Midge but Gavin who calls Scottie 'the hard-headed Scot' (see Note 43, on page 25).

[Editor's note. Oops, Nandor is right about that quote, of course. As for the matter of Alex's alleged bisexuality, it's an inference based on such things as his subjection to his mother, his smooth manner, and the fact that he stands in relation to Devlin much as Vandamm (*definitely* bisexual!) does to Thornhill in *North by Northwest*. Also, Samuels's analysis in the book under review indicates further nuances. However, I suppose that the matter isn't conclusive. I recently pointed out on the Web how the main precedent for Alex's relation to his mother in *Notorious* is the very similar relationship in *Easy Virtue* (1927) of John Whittaker to his grim mother, who quickly moves to end his marriage to a woman of dubious past, but I've noticed no indication there that John is bisexual - merely weak.]

* * *

Jim Vest, Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee, USA

What I most look for in 'The MacGuffin' is a variety of writings on diverse Hitchcockian subjects: everything from well-researched, properly documented essays and reviews, to brief practical matters and trivia, news items and notes, and even something of the unexpected or the superfluous (this is after all a *MacGuffin*) - all linked by your fellow aficionados' shared enthusiasm for Hitchcock's work and wit.

I would hope that, whether scholarly or casual, submissions to 'The MacGuffin' would strive to be stimulating, well thought-through with judgments supported by factual evidence - and above all accurate.

From this perspective, aiming for concrete style and minimal technical jargon are goals to be applauded.

So I say let the centennial party continue and in your pages may we continue to find a pertinent (or impertinent) reflection of Hitchcock's many paradoxes.

* * *

Vertigo
Ellen McKenzie, Stanmore, New South Wales, Australia

I wonder if anyone else ever vacillates from dismay and despair at Judy's death on a particular viewing to a sense of deep satisfaction on another?

[Editor's note. Interesting question, to which I might answer: why not? In watching a Hitchcock film, we're all bundles of paradoxes - compare Jim Vest's point above - and capable of giving the film different readings at different times. What do other readers think about this?]

Under Capricorn

Article by Ken Mogg

[*Australia, 1831. A new Governor has arrived. With him is his nephew, the Hon. Charles Adare (Michael Wilding), who soon finds himself invited to dinner by Samson Flusky (Joseph Cotten), a prospering ex-convict. Flusky lives outside Sydney in a house called 'Minyago Yugilla' ('Why Weepest Thou?') with his wife Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman) who had been a friend of Charles's sister in Ireland. The house's name is fitting. The Fluskys are childless and Henrietta is an alcoholic. The young housekeeper, Milly (Margaret Leighton), secretly loves Flusky, a fellow commoner, and maliciously facilitates his wife's drinking. Charles undertakes to try and rehabilitate Henrietta, thus crossing Milly's schemes. Emotions in the household flare. Flusky becomes jealous of Charles, accidentally shooting and seriously wounding him. To protect her husband, Henrietta reveals that she is guilty of the original crime for which Flusky had been transported. Milly makes a last-ditch attempt to gain Flusky for herself by trying to poison Henrietta, who, however, manages to summon help. Flusky finally sees what Milly has been up to. Ironically, Charles, now recovered, who has been the instrument in a general therapy, knows he must move on. Even Australia is 'not quite big enough'.*]

UNDER CAPRICORN IS ONE of several Hitchcock films of the late 1940s and early 1950s that pleased few people at the time but can today be seen to contain great riches. Scottish playwright James Bridie wrote the scenario, detectably basing it not so much on the atmospheric novel by Helen Simpson (co-author of the novel that Hitchcock had filmed as *Murder!*) as on an unpublished dramatic version by Margaret Linden and John Colton. The result is a moody, stylised film where people talk endlessly - but whose real points stay unspoken. A key line is given to Flusky, who complains about the unfeeling legal process that it goes 'on and on and on'. The line is significant because beyond all the legality - and the talk - lies hope of something else, a return to a lost paradise. *Under Capricorn* may be Hitchcock's finest film to explore that theme.

Hitchcock, though, was never happy with the film, partly because of a series of mishaps connected with its production and later its reception by the public. It was the second Transatlantic picture. Within days of Hitchcock's arrival in London to begin shooting at MGM's Elstree Studios, an electricians' strike halted proceedings. When shooting resumed, a 'hostile feeling' still lingered (as Ingrid Bergman told a friend). This was exacerbated by Hitchcock's use in several scenes of elaborate long-takes, which tried everyone's nerves, much as *Rope*'s ten-minute takes had done.

Another blow came when Hitchcock returned to Hollywood to shoot exteriors. Bad weather delayed filming for two weeks, by which time the Warner Brothers lot was booked for another production. Afterwards, the film was found to need considerable 'tightening'. Urgent telegrams flowed back and forth between Hitchcock and producer Sidney Bernstein in London. The final cost of the picture was a massive $2.5 million.

The film premiered at the Radio City Music Hall, New York, on 8 September, 1949. Initial reviews were mixed. 'At best, a florid, historical romance', 'Time' called it; but several columnists gave plaudits to both Bergman and Michael Wilding. Then another blow fell. The previous year, during *Under Capricorn*'s shooting, Bergman had flown to Paris with her husband Petter Lindstrom to meet the great Italian director Roberto Rossellini. The meeting lasted two hours. There and then, Bergman agreed to appear in Rossellini's next film, and to that end, just before *Under Capricorn* was released, joined him in Stromboli. In fact, it was also a *rendevouz* of another kind. News of the resulting scandal spread quickly. Catholic organisations in America reacted by banning the Hitchcock film. Many cinema owners turned against it.

Hitchcock blamed Rossellini for what had happened and forever afterwards felt bitter towards him. (The feeling was mutual, and was not concealed on either side.) Nor was Hitchcock's temper improved by indifferent London reviews of the film. But 'The Tatler' at least tried to be fair. After calling the film 'ponderous', and professing shock at seeing 'our most promising young screen leading lady, Margaret Leighton' cast as the serpent-like housekeeper, it commented:

> *But both Miss Bergman and Mr Cotten succeed, against probability, in investing their stock characters with dignity and feeling. Miss Bergman, struggling not quite in vain, to translate her Swedish accent into a brogue, captures enough of the legendary glamour of the spirited Irish lady to make her humiliation genuinely touching. Mr. Cotten is authoritative enough to inspire respect as well as pity. Both are expert enough actors to make the passages in which each describes their early romance the most moving in the film.*

Michael Wilding, as a young Irish scapegrace, brings to the attempted rehabilitation of Lady Hattie the lightweight charm which makes him so pleasant a partner for Anna Neagle about Mayfair, [but] is here hopelessly outmatched. The Technicolor, too, does not become him.

The film soon closed, and was eventually reclaimed by the bank that had financed it. It would be Transatlantic's last picture. The fact that in the 1950s the critics of 'Cahiers du Cinéma' in France voted it one of the ten greatest films ever made never changed Hitchcock's generally bad memories of it. He told Truffaut that he felt ashamed of being literally intoxicated beforehand at the thought of the cameras and flashbulbs that would welcome him and Bergman at London airport. (He effectively satirised that moment in the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much.*) A certain general indifference to *Under Capricorn* has continued to the present day. Reportedly, not even the Hitchcock Estate now knows who, if anyone, owns the rights to the film or where the original negative is. If that's true, it's tragic.

For *Under Capricorn* is more than a key Hitchcock film: it is one of his most lovely pictures. Its artful construction keeps reminding you of life's ebb and flow, sometimes wasting, sometimes being savoured. An example of that is the wonderful verandah scene between Charles and Lady Hattie that begins with a view of the house bathed in afternoon sunlight. Appropriately, the shot is actually a painting. The matching passage in the novel speaks picturesquely of Hattie's head 'seen against red feathers of cloud' as she sits in a chair at a French window. In the film, there's an audible stillness - you almost *hear* sunset approaching. Meanwhile, the light is growing fiery. The sub-tropical feel is perfect, which perhaps reflects Hitchcock's researches into sun and cloud effects for *Rope*. What's also remarkable is how the effect here is so integral. First, it leads directly to the moment when Charles holds his jacket behind the window so as to make for Hattie what the novel calls 'a mirror impromptu': irradiated by the sunset, she's being shown that she may yet be queen again of her 'own kingdom'. Charles, whose inspired gesture with the jacket bespeaks his own nobility, will later keep telling her that she's 'coming back'.

Second, the fiery colour is one of several reminders that Hell haunts this harsh land 'down under', this 'infernal place' as the Governor calls it. Men and even animals are repeatedly described as having 'a bit of the Devil' in them. The contrast is with the 'Emerald Isle' back home, a remembered paradise, associated most of all with Hattie. When Charles speaks of taking her boating 'on the bay' (Sydney Harbour) or riding, as part of her rehabilitation, the phrasing recalls her beloved Galway Bay and how she used to ride beside it. Flusky remembers that 'she'd go at a fence as if it had the Kingdom of Heaven on the other side'.

Nonetheless, Australia's very harshness has its own beauty. Some things, Flusky will tell his wife, are 'all in your mind'. Third, then, the same fiery light that suggests the proximity of Hell is allowed, whenever it strikes Hattie's auburn hair, as in the verandah scene, to invoke a contrary condition. Several times during the film her hair is emphasised in this way, and each time we're invited to feel that Heaven may not be so distant after all.

Fourth, the verandah scene marks Hattie's resumption of her embroidery. A note of self-help is being sounded, and a first hint given of how art may activate inner healing. Then, in a brilliant passage, Charles's 'mirror' gesture is followed by a cut to Hattie's smiling reflection next day in an actual mirror that resembles one more painting. (Note how Hitchcock puts the audience in Hattie's position here.) Charles calls her 'the first work of art I've ever done' - and allows himself to kiss her on the cheek.

This is the crux of the film. From this point on, Charles will run the risk of falling in love with another man's wife and losing control. His situation thus duplicates Milly's apropos Flusky, and in fact no film better illustrates a famous remark of Hitchcock's that 'everything's perverted in a different way'. Implied is the existence of a basic life-force (in which James Bridie believed) plus a whole set of attendant ambiguities. Charles is a nobleman and Milly is a commoner, and they end up taking opposed courses of action, but the film is lucid about the hard choices involved. Charles, luxuriating in his upper-class idleness, and Milly, prepared to 'work to the death' for her master, both seemingly do what they are fated to do.

Cinematographer Jack Cardiff's work on *Under Capricorn* is thoroughly professional. Perhaps, though, his book 'Magic Hour' misses the point when it suggests the film was 'fatally inhibited' by its trundling camera and resulting loss of tempo. As already indicated, the theme of life's ebb and flow supports a case for technique drawing attention to itself in this way. Fine work was also done by composer Richard Addinsell whose evocative score suggests, in its principal motif, the young Australian colony vigorously pressing on. Costumes were designed by Roger Furse. He, too, made an important contribution to the film's sense of style. An inspired touch was giving Hattie a tiara for the Governor's Ball, where she really does seem to have returned to her 'kingdom'. Hitchcock had chosen his co-workers shrewdly. Laurence Olivier effectively complimented him a few years later by choosing the same triumvirate of Cardiff, Addinsell and Furse to work on *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957).

Under Capricorn and Australia

Both Helen Simpson (1897-1940), the author of the original novel, and the film's makers did their homework. Sydney-born Simpson took the *donné* of her book - a man's transportation to Australia for a crime committed by another - from one of Australia's 19th-century classics: Marcus Clarke's 'His Natural Life'. And her novel's theme of a quest for freedom found an appropriate corollary in the history of Australia under Governor Richard Bourke (1777-1855), played by Cecil Parker in the film. Bourke, born of an Anglo-Irish family, had charm and humanity. During his six years in office, he became perhaps the most popular Governor to that time, implementing several progressive reforms. For their part, the film's researchers gave special attention to visual matters. The design of Flusky's residence, 'Minyago Yugilla' with its wide, turreted front, resembles work by ex-convict Francis Greenway (1777-1837), the most important architect in the young colony. And panoramic views of Sydney and its harbour seem based on oil paintings by Conrad Martens (1801-78) in the style of Claude Lorraine and Turner, done soon after he arrived in the colony in 1835.

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BOOK REVIEW

Paglia, Camille: '*The Birds*' (BFI Publishing, 1998; 104pp; pb)

Review by Craig Richard Canfield

There appear to be many good reasons why Camille Paglia, professor at the University of Arts in Philadelphia, and author of 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence From Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson' (1990), should write a book for the British Film Institute on Hichcock's *The Birds* (1963). Who is more familiar with the depiction of the demonic aspects of Nature in literature than Paglia? The subject, well examined in her earlier work, parallels, at least on the surface, the theme of Hitchcock's film. 'The archetypal power of Alfred Hitchcock's great saga of malevolent nature, *The Birds*', wrote Paglia at the beginning of 'Sexual Personae', 'comes from its reactivation of the Harpy myth, shown as both bird and woman.' And at the end of the book, an essay on Emily Dickinson is nearly overrun by its avian imagery. All this is perfect preparation for '*The Birds*'.

Paglia not only looks at the technical aspects of the film, she also brings to the project her own metaphor-manufacturing plant, assembling poetic correspondences as she goes along, enlivening her scene-by-scene tour of the film. She may place Hitchcock in the tradition of the Surrealists, but Surrealist humor and imagination are her own as well. 'Academe breeds nightmares', she writes, echoing the Surrealists; 'the sleep of reason produces monsters.' Her brilliant linkage of the girl in the film 'kicking her legs like a windmill' as 'a gull steadily pecks the back of her head' with 'that famous definition of Surrealism, the chance encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table', is alone worth the small price of her book.

'Everyone has to stand in front of the house of his childhood in order to recover himself,' Kierkegard reminds us. The passages in which Paglia peers into what she calls 'the locked prisonhouse of harsh family memory' are the most provocative of all. She pitches into this mix bits of 'Hitchcock's own early family experiences that obsessively run through his work,' glimpses into the relationship between the director and his shadow.

At times, Paglia makes Melanie and Mitch, the main characters in *The Birds*, appear like Jungian projections of Hitchcock himself. Melanie plays Hitchcock's negative anima. Extremely manipulative, she has the clerk in the Bodega Bay post office 'bashfully bewitched, gazing at her like the elders of Troy thunderstruck by matchless Helen.' Before he can stop himself, the clerk is doing three things on top of one another: arranging for the boat to take Melanie across the bay, figuring out Mitch's daughter's name, and going outside to point out to Melanie where Mitch lives. Still another part of Melanie mirrors Hitchcock's own abandonment (psychological if not physical) by his own 'faithless' mother.

Paglia's depiction of Mitch makes one rethink an explanation of Robin Wood that the birds are 'sent by God to punish evil humanity'. Wood writes that 'this could only be the case if it we postulated an unusually monstrous and callous God, an Old Testament God, not a Christian one.' But perhaps this *is* the God of *The Birds*. William Blake's *Nobodaddy*, a God who turns into His Satanic opposite, comes to mind. Paglia states that there is no God in *The Birds*; however, a Blakeian God, monstrous and callous, seems to be everywhere. Mitch may be 'a masculine whirlwind'

when he's fighting the birds, but Paglia shows him to be peculiarly birdlike himself. (Everyone that loves Mitch is attacked: perhaps Melanie, in fighting back Mitch in the attic, is not so psychotic after all.) Paglia writes that Mitch is following a homing device in returning to Bodega Bay each weekend. When Mitch tends Melanie's wound, 'the movement becomes peck, peck, peck, like the crow.' He also pecks like a prosecutor. Paglia delights in the conversations between Mitch and Melanie where Melanie must defend herself against Mitch's accusations. Mitch connects with what Paglia's mentor Harold Bloom writes about another 'prosecutor turned persecutor', that he's a 'blocking agent'. 'In Greek,' Bloom tells us, 'a blocking agent is "diabolos".'

Donald Spoto in his Hitchcock biography reflects often on Hitchcock's demonic fantasies. There is an extended section on *The Birds* in which he compares Hitchcock's work to that of Hieronymous Bosch. 'Hitchcock,' he writes, 'using the birds of art and England and *Psycho*, explored with a demonic ferocity...' Paglia finds Spoto's biography 'excellent', and it is obvious from what she writes about Hitchcock in the '*The Birds*' that she has all the evidence to show how the birds are a depiction of Hitchcock's inner state. But something blocks her binoculars, and she draws back from making such connections. It is ironic that with all her excavation of the demonic in literature and art, Paglia has not followed the migration of the birds to their source in Hitchcock's psyche. Above her dazzling Dionysian leaps sits the intellectualizing Apollonian Paglia who has banished the Furies from her own book and consequently from our picture of Hitchcock as well.

How are Hitchcock's complexes or demons, that were brought to light by Spoto, implicated in the reactivation of the Harpy myth? On this, Paglia is silent. Rather, she continues to lionize Hitchcock, while projecting the demonic onto Tippi Hedren. After denouncing Wordsworth for fleeing from the specters of the pagan Nature cult he reawakened, Paglia has joined the blackout and backlash.

After Spoto, connections between the psyche of the director and the birds seem obvious; but Paglia in her defense of Hitchcock has reasons for not drawing them. Were she to show the birds as symbols of demons or complexes from which Hitchcock suffered as a result of his childhood, that Hitchcock's rape/murder fantasies projected into so much of his work were truly his own, that the birds were his judgmental avengers against flirtatious girls with whom, if we are to believe Spoto, he was obsessed, then Paglia would fear falling into the camp of feminists who with their own projections have hung Hitchcock on the peg of king misogynist.

Skirting the more nuanced account of Hitchcock's 'misogyny' found in the works of such writers as Tania Modeski, Paglia reinstates the blackout, cementing her hell's angels firmly into place on the frieze of her prose. With all her complicated, effervescent, poetic analysis of the film, she ends up playing the part of a Hitchcock apologist. Paglia is right, Hitchcock did love women and he can't simply be reduced to a 'misogynist'. But the 'God' that was in Hitchcock didn't love women, whom He saw as flirtatious, unfaithful, and complacent, and He sought to punish them, to punish them with *The Birds*. Hitchcock never wanted *The Birds* to have an ending. Perhaps this shows his understanding that the spectacle of the birds, the exhibition of it all, was as far as he was able to go. It was a parade, a way of acting out fantasies, without ever letting the ghost out of the closet. Such an exhibition, like any blocking agent, prohibited Hitchcock's true exorcism.

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Hitchcock's cameo in *Lifeboat*

Article by Susan Smith

OF ALL HITCHCOCK'S CAMEO appearances, the one in *Lifeboat* is surely the most memorable.[1] It is here, of course, that the director ingeniously overcomes his most extreme experimentation with the single-set film by turning up in a newspaper advertisement for a fictitious dieting drug called 'REDUCO'. Yet what has tended to go unnoticed is the way in which Hitchcock's cameo serves to link the filmmaker directly to the characters and their (both literal and metaphorical) hunger by drawing attention to his own much publicised, drastic abstinence from food. Indeed, just as the characters' own debilitated condition tends to have a very detrimental effect upon their morale, so do the contrasting postures presented by the 'Before' and 'After' images of Hitchcock in the newspaper advertisement hint discreetly at the adverse impact of such extreme weight loss upon the filmmaker's own mood. So, contrary to the advertisement's ostensible purpose of celebrating the director's success in overcoming what had apparently become a life-threatening obesity in real life,[2] it is the heavier Hitchcock which strikes the most positive, energetic pose (standing assertively upright and looking straight ahead), as distinct from the more downcast, introverted stance in the second photograph (conveyed, above all, by the slight but significant drooping of the head). The full significance of the

cameo, however, derives not only from the sense it conveys of Hitchcock's empathy with the characters' plight but also from the way that it invites us to consider their unpleasant predicament and the film's own rather ill-humoured, uncompromisingly desolate tone as a consequence of the filmmaker's own 'hunger'. What, in fact, the cameo presents are two very different, competing notions of the filmmaker. The familiar, well-loved public persona of the corpulent, food-loving director is juxtaposed or 'doubled' with a much less recognisable alter ego version of this, consisting of a leaner, more morose, potentially meaner Hitchcock. And it is this second persona - whose ascetic, punitive, more malevolent mood is best encapsulated by the dieting drug's slogan 'OBESITY SLAYER' - which, in various forms, dominates and pervades *Lifeboat*.

One of the main casualties of this downbeat tone is the humour, which is confined mainly to Tallulah Bankhead's ironic performance-style and, somewhat appropriately, to a sequence centred upon the characters' attemp tto catch fish for food. But this filmmaking persona of 'obesity slayer' is suggested most emphatically and extensively by the way in which a knife is metaphorically taken to the film set itself. Effectively mirroring Hitchcock's own much reduced bodily state, the set is accordingly cut down from the standard Hollywood scale to the bare bones of a single lifeboat (itself a rather fragile wooden body compared to the forces of the sea and storm) and a minimal mise-en-scène (the latter becoming increasingly so with the progressive shedding of various objects, as well as people, as they go overboard). Such extreme set constraints necessitate, in turn, a further trimming down of the Hitchcock figure by forcing the director's usual walk-on role to be reduced instead to the size of a photographic image within the frame. There is an equivalent paring down in musical terms, too, as the movie's score is restricted to the opening and closing sequences, while the only source of diegetic music is supplied by a single flute played intermittently by two characters during the film. The only production value that the film seems to invest in is that of the glamorous female star and even here Hitchcock plays upon the incongruity of such a figure appearing in this unlikely setting at the beginning of the film, before proceeding to deprive Bankhead of that glamour (including the indispensable mink coat) as the narrative progresses.[3]

If the audience of *Lifeboat* is consequently allowed only a very small quota of the usual filmic 'supplies' enjoyed during the course of watching a Hollywood movie, then the notion of dieting is inflicted upon the characters in much more extreme, literal form via the rationing and eventual loss of their food and water supplies. The storm[4] which intervenes to sweep away their rations altogether itself appears as a manifestation of authorial bad temper, following on, as if in direct, punitive response, to their theft of the German's compass (an important symbol of directorial control). But Hitchcock's dieting condition is inflicted in the most macabre, debilitating fashion upon Gus via the operation to amputate this character's leg.[5] The connection between Gus's leg amputation and Hitchcock's own weight loss is suggested quite clearly by the fact that it is the same character who earlier held up the newspaper containing the director's cameo appearance. It is also Gus who, on regaining consciousness after the operation, tries to make his own (not surprisingly less successful) black joke about losing weight (Gus's joke also alluding to his own rather stocky build). The film's ambivalent attitude towards Gus is typified by the way that this character is allowed to drink a whole bottle of brandy (the director's favourite drink[6]) as a substitute anaesthetic, only to become, as a result, even more dehydrated than before.

If anything, the character who most closely embodies the full complexity of the filmmaker's implied persona in *Lifeboat* is the bulky German U-boat captain, Willie, in the sense that his own acts of deprivation towards the characters are increasingly motivated by a need to both satisfy and disavow his own hunger and thirst. This culminates in the murder of Gus which appears prompted not only by the German's overt attempt to stop the other crew members from finding out about his possession of the water bottle (the furtive manner in which his drinking is indulged enacting the dieter's guilty fantasy of secret 'bingeing'[7]) but also by a need to erase and deny this starved version of his own self:

> *You can't imagine how painful it was to me, all night long to watch him, turning and suffering and nothing I could do for him. ... The best way to help him was to let him go. I had no right to stop him, even if I wanted to.* A poor cripple dying of hunger and thirst. What good could ... life be to someone like that?

The final encounter between Willie and Gus while the other crew members are asleep thus becomes a rather private confrontation between these two Hitchcock selves. Their role as mirror images is made clear at the point when Gus, while hallucinating about having his thirst quenched, raises an imaginary drink to his lips, only to see the German doing likewise with a real bottle of water (the same one from which Gus had earlier drunk the brandy). The other crew members' subsequent murder of the German (the violence of which is itself motivated by their extreme hunger and thirst but only serves ultimately to leave them even more spent than before) therefore deprives them of this important, symbolic directing force within the narrative. The significance of Willie's ability to act as the engine that

drives the lifeboat ('When we killed the German, we killed our motor', accedes Rittenhouse) lies precisely in the way that it is linked so explicitly back to his access to the food and water supplies. The importance of these as symbols of directorial power is emphasized by the way that the water bottle replaces the compass as the secret, privileged object enabling Willie to control the boat's course. What *Lifeboat* effectively enacts through its narrative, then, is a demonstration of the twin consequences or dangers associated with 'hunger' in a Hitchcock film. Indeed, if the vessel itself can be seen as a metaphor for the film project as a whole (complete with crew/cast and a resident captain), then what its shifting course and battered condition seem to imply is that, without 'food' as its cinematic fuel, a Hitchcock movie is liable either to become sapped of its energy and tone and in danger of floating aimlessly along, or subject to a more malevolent driving force insistent upon curtailing every aspect of its narrative world.

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Notes

1. Hitchcock's cameo in *Lifeboat* is also the director's own personal favourite. See his comments in Truffaut, 'Hitchcock', p.226.
2. See Donald Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock: The Dark Side of Genius' (London, Collins, 1983), pp.266-7.
3. Bankhead, who was praised by Hitchcock himself for having given a 'Bancock performance', applied the director's minimalist approach in her very own idiosyncratic way by turning up on the set without any underwear. See Spoto, ibid., pp. 268-9.
4. The two storms and the shipwreck at the beginning of the film strongly evoke Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' - a play which Hitchcock also alludes to in his earlier British film *Rich and Strange*. Interestingly, there were also two aborted Hitchcock films based on shipwrecks - *The Titanic*, Selznick's first planned production for the director on his arrival in Hollywood (see Spoto, ibid., p.179), and *The Wreck of the Mary Deare*, which was disbanded in favour of *Vertigo* (ibid., pp.392-3).
5. The amputation of Gus's leg is also mirrored later by the cracking of the boat's mast during the second, worst storm, a link even further suggested by the fact that Gus is tied to the mast when it snaps. This analogy between the boat and the male body is also alluded to on Gus's first arrival on the boat when he comments upon its battered condition ('Holy smokes, look at this mess') in a way that also seems to refer to the present and future state of his own injured body. In view of the demanding nature of Gus's relationship with Rosie, as implied by her love of marathon'dancing' for 'eighty consecutive hours', the gangrenous leg also becomes symptomatic of the romantic and sexual stresses placed upon this character's masculinity by the active female (the 'leg' buckling under the pressure of such demands), stresses which the amputation therefore helps to relieve (rather than merely heighten). Given the way that Gus's murder takes place (as with the other disposals of bodies) while the other characters are asleep, Willie can thus be seen to enact a corresponding collective desire on the part of these characters to efface and deny this embarrassing embodiment of impaired, castrated masculinity. Symbolically, then, *Lifeboat* also links weight loss and abstinence from 'food' to notions of masculine impairment and castration.
6. Spoto, op. cit., p.267.
7. See Spoto on Hitchcock's own apparent habit of secret eating and drinking. Ibid., p.172.

The Skin of Our Teeth
The Man Who Knew Too Much Dines Out

Article by Murray Pomerance

[Editor's introduction. Early in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), Hitchcock allows Dr Ben McKenna (James Stewart) to seem more *knowing* than his wife Jo (Doris Day). With their young son Hank (Christopher Olsen), the couple are holidaying in Marrakesh, North Africa. In general, Ben appears to be the one who has the final say in family matters. We see him dismiss as unfounded Jo's feeling that they are being watched - specifically by an English couple, the Draytons (Bernard Miles and Brenda de Banzie). Ben has status (as a doctor), he has physical height, and, unlike Jo, he has been to Marrakesh before. Why shouldn't he know best (or more)?

But when the McKennas encounter the Draytons in a Marrakesh restaurant, Hitchcock reverses our sympathies vis-à-vis Ben and Jo. Jo is (apparently) vindicated, for Lucy Drayton admits that she and her husband, Edward, have indeed been watching the McKennas, Jo in particular - whose past career as a pop singer they have long followed, even to the extent of owning all her records. (Jo, though, had agreed to give up her career on marrying Ben, who had taken her to settle in Indianapolis where his general practice is located.)

In the restaurant, the two couples first find themselves seated in adjoining booths. The film extracts humour from Ben's discomfort at having to turn his apparently sore neck, with the implication that he is in fact discomforted at finding Jo not only vindicated but in the spotlight of admiring fans' attention, as in former days.

After some desultory conversation, the two couples decide to join each other in a communal meal, where the main course to be eaten is *tajine* of squab (pigeon). Visually, notes Murray Pomerance, the roasted squabs, appetizing but tiny upon their plate, bear to the gargantuan Ben and his presumably enormous appetite the same relation that the quail and an olive prepared by Mrs Oxford in *Frenzy* (1972) bear to her husband's appetite, honed on a hard day's detective work at Scotland Yard. (Mrs Oxford has been taking a course in gourmet cooking, none too successfully it seems.)

Here, then, is Professor Pomerance's analysis of the restaurant scene - or rather, a fragment of that analysis, which in turn forms part of an analysis of the whole film. The analysis is particularly indebted to the great theorist of 'performance', Erving Goffman.]

WE HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED to Ben and Jo McKenna as exemplars of two different approaches to the world, what might be called "knowledge" and "participation." In brief, by means of medical training and his rural standoffishness, Ben has been taught to "know" experience, to understand it from a distance by means of a mechanism of intelligent application. He will be in this film a man who knows too much. (To put a feminist slant on it: a man, who knows too much.) Jo's method, instead, is to project herself into a circumstance by means of her voice. If that voice is a trained instrument - compared to mine, it certainly is - it is still a little rough, a little familiar, not the voice of a diva. Now, a central purpose of the meal scene is to make a separation between Ben's analytical and Jo's participatorial way of approaching a situation. Hitchcock, after all, could have had the McKennas meet the Draytons in quite different circumstances: but it is while joining in the dismemberment of a bird that these people come, at the most barbaric level, to see and understand one another. It is while Edward Drayton speaks about his little property in the country ("Not what you'd call a farm, it's really more of a smallholding") that the food appears. We have not a single bird but a pair of squab, representing, some might suggest, Lucy and Jo, since they are the two rather expressive persons (the two "singers") at table; and certainly, as it will turn out, the two characters most devoured by the action in the film. But I think it is more likely the two squab are Ben and Jo, roasted to a turn. Soon the Draytons, plotting to kidnap Hank, will have the third McKenna bird in hand; and a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. But for now, the birds are delectable, and it will be sufficient to find a way to eat them. *And yet, why? Why, in this particular film, show eating at all?*

Squabs are pigeons, and in the convention of the mystery genre, pigeons are the marks of cons, or squealers. Ben's squealing to Jo is the spring of the plot. Further, the McKennas are certainly pigeons of the conspiracy, and educational pigeons of the Draytons, in the sense that they are taken for a ride.

Yet there is no real food in cinema, except the cinema itself. Roasted squab in a *tajine* are inaccessible to us, magnificent in their sunset color and accompanied by the *khubuz* bread Ben has trouble even recognizing as such:

> *The second waiter serves Ben and Jo a loaf of bread, as they lean over to savor the meat.*
> BEN *(A little puzzled):* Ah, looks like bread.

We can neither taste the birds, nor fully appreciate the experience of the McKennas and the Draytons, who presumably can. But, of course - they can't, either. Characters have no gravity as such.[1] Especially in film, where they so poignantly resemble the people of our lives, characters fool us in their seeming tactility, their seeming rotundness, especially with Hitchcock sculpting them. Ben and Jo do not taste the squab, but James Stewart and Doris Day do. So, by bringing us a scene of exactly these proportions at this critical juncture of the film, Hitchcock reminds us, at the deepest level, of the structure that has long and altogether fascinated us: actors playing characters, and very special characters, to be sure: characters who are one thing at home in Indianapolis but something quite different here on vacation in Marrakesh; that is to say, characters who can wear characters: *characterizing characters*.

For that matter, any characters we meet may be putting on characters for us to meet, acting friendly if not actually being friends. We must not be unprepared to discovered that the Lucy and Edward Drayton we now dine with are only masks.

And I think we will see, if we look closely at their "act," that the Draytons are the superior performers. English, after all, "is their language," as Ian Richardson once said of Shakespeare.[2] They have not just learned it, they have formed it. Every word uttered by the Draytons has both elegance, and directness, and appropriateness, and precision. Ben and Jo, for example, are having a little trouble breaking their bread - read that literally: *breaking bread with the Draytons* - and the problem is carried to such an extent that Jo whines, "It won't break," and then Ben grits his teeth and lifts his leg for thrust before giving it a severe rip. The women giggle. And Ben is a little frightened he may have broken with etiquette, shown bad form, so he says, "Is that the way you do it?" Lucy Drayton responds, giggling girlishly - with an innocent pleasure, giving us to sense that her own passion may as yet be undiscovered - "That's quite all right. That was a tough one."

Now, *tough* is the exact and particular word to describe the bread in this scene. Good, yes. Pleasing, no doubt. But *tough*. And tough suggests, too, "difficult," and "raw, uncivilized," and "challenging," and also "personably resistant." But as we recollect, the bread - central object in a hilarious interlude - *did* seem to be consciously resisting Ben, goading him, teasing him. And Lucy is also implying that the bread in this place can vary, and the one Ben picked up was a tough one. All of this in one word, and more. The "one" in her comment is not the loaf, or the morsel yanked from it, but the stagey little routine in which Ben managed to do the yanking without capsizing into his wife's lap. *That was a tough one*. To whatever extent she is putting on an act for the McKennas, then, it is made up not just of postures, jewelry, smiles, raisings of the eyebrows: but also carefully chosen words. Next to Jo (this meal scene allows us to see) the most sophisticated user of the voice in this film is Lucy Drayton.

The fluidity and timing with which each of these couples makes the switch from staged character (the stage is the table in the Moroccan restaurant) to observant audience and then back again, while the opposing couple moves in matched, but mirrored, relation, is a marvel of scriptwriting and direction. Just to emphasize that it is performance, not experience, that is going on - or experience *as* performance - Lucy rebounds with, "Does it chew any better than it tears?" *Chew*, a profound and very internal directness. Ben surely isn't chewing, he's eating, mouthing, nibbling. Even Ben's doppelgänger at table isn't quite *chewing*: we don't admit, when we chew, that we chew. But far under the socialized surface, back at the primordial campfire, the owner of Ben's teeth - an inside animal, a being before and without civility - is chewing. Lucy's question reveals this laminated structure of civilization laid upon raw stock, rather forcefully. Of course, the chewing is just a mouth-use, and in that sense different in manner but not in form from speaking itself. Ben McKenna the diner isn't speaking here either, nor is Ben McKenna the visiting American. They are silent while James Stewart uses a voice. If that is a general condition in film, here at the low table Hitchcock chooses to make us pointedly aware of it.

If the dining scene is a kind of tennis game of performances, in which the camera bounces back and forth to aid an avid viewer (who resembles, yes, most of the fans in the tennis sequence in *Strangers on a Train*), and if we can see that the McKennas are putting on "Dr. and Mrs. McKenna" for the Draytons who are putting on "Mr and Mrs Drayton" for them, we can illuminate the structure much further by asking after the presences who create, don, and sport these characters. Who are the McKennas who are putting on "The McKennas"? Who are the Draytons who are putting on "The Draytons"?

This is a central question. If the squab aren't really being devoured here, because they're filmic squab and, as such, inedible, then what's being devoured at this table is the act each couple is giving the other. The Draytons are eating the McKennas up, and vice versa. As we glance back we see easily enough that Ben McKenna who is performing "Dr. McKenna" is not as jovial, as goofy, as engaged, or as present to the moment as "Dr. McKenna" is. He is in a daydream, and has been since we came upon him at the back of the bus in the second shot of the film. He allows himself to be drawn by Jo, but he is not with her. They do not see eye-to-eye on some fundamental issues. He is somewhat uninterested in his son. He is perplexed by, and relatively uncaring about, Moroccan culture. He is irritable, and aloof: consider his alarmed and chilly facial expression when confronted at his hotel door by a very genteel man who asks, most politely, for the room of Monsieur Montgomery. He's not, in short, the sort of person cultivated middle-class English folk might like to dine with. Yet they have seemed eager to beckon him into the celebration, and with his mask intact he goes.

Jo is reserved, lost in thought, held back whenever she is not allowed to be her singing self. Singing with Hank she is free and delightful. Speaking with Ben she is afraid, cautious, obedient. Even probing Louis Bernard on the hotel balcony before coming to this restaurant, she was intimidated, hushed in tone, more cautious than eager. Now, however, in the presence of "fans," she is outgoing, giggly, warm, indeed brilliant.

But if we can say that the "Dr. and Mrs. McKenna" the Draytons are meeting are far more engaging than the Dr. and Mrs. McKenna putting them on, of the Draytons themselves we have seen very little and can say almost nothing. Lucy nudged Edward to notice Jo in front of the Hôtel de la Mamounia, and the nudge was, more than anything else, efficient. They've been married a long time, and have worked out all the minute delicacies of communication and a thousand ways to mount facades. Here at the restaurant we've encountered virtually nothing behind the "scene" they play; and so the underlying reality of the Draytons remains for us as alluring but evasive as the taste of those birds.

What is particularly important about the presentations taking place in the restaurant is this: that we are entirely aware of them, because they take place in a somewhat awkward and uncomfortable social setting, a dinner-out, where presentations are typically put in place. We would expect to see nothing else. That is why the word "chew" has such resonance. The acting is both expected and noticeable. Whenever, in a theatrical setting, we are shown the

mechanism of an actual performance in addition to the performance itself, the showing constitutes a *play-within-a-play*. This is a technique that is certainly present in the dramatizations of the fifteenth century, and probably earlier, but it was Shakespeare who gave the enterprise its greatest "play," and whose work certainly influenced Alfred Hitchcock. Ann Righter suggests that although it contains a play within it, *The Tempest* is entirely a play-within-a-play;[3] and Elizabeth Burns notes the re-toning of the presented play-within-the-play in modern life, where one finds a "devaluation of 'occasion' in a formal sense and the preference for unceremonious behaviour."[4]

We are likely to think it is performers who are performing these characters--for a quick example, that the Lucy Drayton giggling over squab is being played by Brenda de Banzie: but really, it is characters who are performing these characters. The Lucy Drayton giggling over squab is played by the Lucy Drayton we have really not met yet, and *she* is played by Brenda de Banzie. For an additional ironic twist, it is actually Brenda de Banzie playing both roles, but the one role is *inside*, not *beside*, the other.

What happens to the birds, therefore - that they are opened, that their surfaces are pulled back, that they are shown in manifold layers - is exactly what happens to the "people" in this sequence.

And our own ability to *see* - or *think* we see - the acting is exactly our trap. To exactly the extent that we can "see through" the artificiality, the gaudy sociability, of the Draytons, and the nervous presentation-of-self of the McKennas, we are seduced by the apparently innocuous and unmotivated "normalcy" of these characters. Therefore, finding them elsewhere in the film, in non-celebratory, "normal" daily life, we are moved to accept them unquestioningly.

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Notes

1. Metz might have said, both diners and meal are without surface.
2. Innis College, University of Toronto, c. 1980.
3. 'Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play', Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962, p. 81.
4. 'Theatricality: A Study of Convention in the Theatre and in Social Life', London: Longman, 1972, p. 48. See as well Silvio Gaggi, 'Modern/Postmodern: A Study in Twentieth Century Arts and Ideas', Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

Why I Make Melodramas (1936)

Article by Alfred Hitchcock

WHAT IS MELODRAMA? If I admit I prefer to make films that may be so classified I must first define it. Try to define it for yourself and see how difficult it is.

One man's drama is another man's melodrama. In the Victorian theatre there were only two divisions of entertainment - the melodrama and the comedy. Then snobbery asserted itself. What you saw at Drury Lane was drama. At the Lyceum it was melodrama. The only difference was the price of the seat.

"Melodrama" came to be applied by sophisticates to the more naive type of play or story, in which every situation was overdrawn and every emotion underlined.

But still the definition is not universal. The "melodrama" of the West-end may be taken as drama in the Provinces. To some extent "melodrama" seems to be in the eye - and mind - of the beholder.

In real life, to be called "melodramatic" is to be criticised. The term suggests behaviour which is hysterical and exaggerated.

A woman may receive the news of her husband's death by throwing up her arms and screaming, or she may sit quite still and say nothing. The first is melodramatic. But it may well happen in real life. In the cinema a melodramatic film is one based on a series of sensational incidents. So melodrama, you must admit, has been and is the backbone and lifeblood of the cinema.

I use melodrama because I have a tremendous desire for understatement in film-making. Understatement in a dramatic situation powerful enough to be called melodramatic is, I think, the way to achieve naturalism and realism, while keeping in mind the entertainment demands of the screen, the first of these being for colourful action.

Examine what was popular in the provincial theatre before films and you will see that the first essential was that the play had plenty of "meat." It is to that audience, multiplied many times, we must cater in films.

But - and it is a difficult "but" - the same audience has been taught to expect the modern, naturalistic treatment of their "meaty" dramas. The screen has created the expectation of a degree of realism which was never asked of the theatre.

Now realism on the screen would be impossible. Actual life would be dull, in all but its more exceptional aspects, such as crime. Realism, faithfully represented, would be unreal, because there is in the minds of the cinema or theatre audience what I would call the "habit of drama." This habit causes the audience to prefer on the screen things that are outside their own, real-life experience.

So there is the problem - how to combine colour, action, naturalism, the semblance of reality, and situations which will be intriguingly unfamiliar to most of the audience. All these must be blended.

My own greatest desire is for realism. Therefore I employ what is called melodrama - but which might as well be called ultra-realism - for all my thinking has led me to the conclusion that there is the only road to screen realism that will still be entertainment.

Perhaps the strangest criticism I encounter is that I sometimes put wildly improbable things, grotesque unrealities, on the screen when actually the incident criticised is lifted bodily from real life. The reason is that the strange anomalies of real life, the inconsequences of human nature, appear unreal.

On the other hand, if they *are* real they may be too near the onlooker's experience and he does not go to the cinema to see his own troubles at closer range.

The man who understands the psychology of the public better than anybody else to-day is the editor of the successful, popular modern newspaper. He deals to a great extent in melodrama. The modern treatment of news, with its simple statement, which makes the reader "live" the story, is brilliant in its analysis of the public mind.

If the film-makers understood the public as newspapers do they might hit the mark more often.

OUR BASIC OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION RATE is $22 Aust. ($18 US) for 4 air-posted issues every 12-15 months. For 4 surface-mailed copies, the rate is $16 Aust. ($14 US). Make drafts, etc., payable to 'The MacGuffin'. AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIBERS please pay $16 for 4 issues. THE BASIC OVERSEAS BACK-ISSUE RATE is $6 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (1-3 copies). Otherwise, $5 (Aust. or US) per air-mailed copy (4 or more copies), $4 (Aust. or US) per surface-mailed copy (at least 4 copies please). Please note that only the following back-issues are available: issue 20 (*The Wrong Man*); issue 21 (*The Trouble With Harry*); issue 22 (*Rich and Strange*, plus interview with Sidney Gottlieb); issue 23 (*Rear Window*, plus Charles Barr on *Rich and Strange*); issue 24 (Hitchcock and Oscar Wilde); issue 25 (*Vertigo*).

ODD SPOT: LACK OF DIALOGUE

After completing *Blackmail* (1929) as a sound film, Hitchcock was slated to make his next film from an original script by novelist Arnold Bennett, famous for such books as 'Anna of the Five Towns' (1904) and 'The Old Wives' Tale' (1908). In January 1929, Hitchcock and Bennett met to discuss the script called *Punch and Judy* (possibly an anticipation of the quarrelling couple in *Rich and Strange*, 1931). Almost immediately, differences between the two men became apparent. Not only was the 61-year-old novelist not greatly sympathetic to the film medium - or to the still relatively unknown Hitchcock - but what seems to have most annoyed him was being told that, with the advent of the talkies, it would be necessary for him to supply his script with dialogue. By March the project had been abandoned.

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 26 | March 2000 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

'MACGUFFIN' READERS NANDOR BOKOR and Danny Nissim attended the Hitchcock Centennial celebrations in London last year, including some of the rare screenings held by the BFI. Nandor has sent a description of *Lord Camber's Ladies* (1932), which Hitchcock produced and Benn Levy directed: 'a charming romantic comedy with some crime and mystery elements thrown in. It starts with a very long kiss (cf. *Notorious*), and at one point resembles *The Trouble With Harry*: Lord Camber (Nigel Bruce) *thinks* he has murdered his wife (which he hasn't) and *thinks* he is poisoning himself (which he isn't). A huge bottle of poison in the foreground of one shot anticipates both *The Lady Vanishes* and *Notorious*.'

To show that nothing is ever really new, Danny emailed me this excerpt from the 1861 Preface to Wilkie Collins's novel 'The Dead Secret' (1857): 'It may not be out of place, here, to notice a critical objection which was raised, in certain quarters, against the construction of the narrative. I was blamed for allowing the "Secret" to glimmer on the reader at an early period of the story, instead of keeping it in total darkness till the end. If this was a mistake (which I venture to doubt), I committed it with both eyes open. After careful consideration, and after trying the experiment both ways, I thought it most desirable to let the effect of the story depend on expectation rather than surprise ...' Clearly a foreshadowing, this, of Hitchcock's decision to reveal the secret of *Vertigo* before the end!

Someone else who was regularly in touch while 'The MacGuffin' was in recess was screenwriter and sculptor Robert Schoen. In view of our mutual regard for Hitchcock's screwball comedy *Mr and Mrs Smith* - see my article, one of several on that film, in this issue - I'm happy to quote Robert's estimation of it: '*Mr and Mrs Smith* is a great film *because* of its subversiveness. The back half has a darkness to it that approaches more tension than humour, and a gruelling realism shines through material that would only be a farce in other hands. Sort of like Kubrick's *The Shining*, where the real horror is everyday family relationships.'

Finally, I thank Australian film lecturer and critic Tom Ryan whose comments by email last October on the NYU Hitchcock Celebration, which he attended, were most interesting. Some of Tom's generally enthusiastic remarks on that event are echoed in this issue by other correspondents. So I'll just quote this: 'Of the various papers I attended (a mixture of the pointless and the intriguing), the two highlights for me were Bill Paul's reading of *I Confess* - very good textual analysis - and Angelo Restivo's presentation of sound in *The Birds*.' 'The MacGuffin' understands that many of the papers from the NYU event will be published in book form.

To all our readers and contributors, welcome to this long-delayed issue of 'The MacGuffin'. Thank you for being patient.

Good (reading and) viewing!

Coming attractions

Book review issue (including reviews of 'Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays', 'English Hitchcock', 'Hitchcock in America', etc.); transcripts from star and writer sessions of NYU Hitchcock Celebration; Theodore Price on *Torn Curtain*; 'An aspect of Hitchcock's France'; 'Reincarnation and Hitchcock'. Plus the usual features, incl. 'Letters'.

LETTERS

Mike McCrann, Los Angeles, USA

Last night I saw the restored *Rear Window* at the Leo S. Bing theater at the Los Angeles Museum of Art. Patricia Hitchcock and Georgine Darcy ['Miss Torso' - Ed.] and the restorer Jim Katz were there and had a question and answer session after the screening.

The new print looked good. Unfortunately, the Paramount Color of their 50s films was never the greatest to begin with. Nothing like the old technicolor. So as good as the print looks, the cinematograhy is only so-so to begin with. I know it is heresy, but *Rear Window* has never been one of my Hitchcock favorites. I find it enjoyable - funny and farily well acted - but I have always thought it rather dragged and was not really very suspenseful. This time around I paid special attention to Grace Kelly (a favorite) and Thelma Ritter. Thelma was as good as I remembered and Grace was just starting to become the STAR. Her performance is a little strained in the beginning but as the film unwinds she gets better. Especially when her humor is allowed to shine. James Stewart is wonderful of course. Wendell Corey is so-so as always. I enjoyed the film but would much rather they'd spent the time and money restoring *Under Capricorn* or even *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Jim Katz never specifically stated that they would work on *Man Who Knew Too Much* next.

The question and answer session was fun, but with way too many technical restoration questions. Jim Katz finally turned the attention to Pat and Georgine and both were amusing even if they did not get as much time as I would have liked. Georgine talked about being a dancer working with Ben Blue in Vegas and having them call about the part. She said she waited till her engagement was finished then came to LA. She met with Hitchcock and received the part on the spot without a screentest. She said she used her set 'apartment' as a place to rest while she was not needed, and that it was not built to scale. She said she did her own choreography of her dances as they did not provide one and only told her to 'do a little dance'.

Pat Hitchcock talked about visiting the set in 1954 and how the basement was hollowed out for the lower floor. You entered on the James Stewart level and the rest was actually up and down. She said how much her father liked working with Stewart as he was the 'Everyman', and did not really say much new about the film or its making. When someone asked her about her two Hitchcock appearances, she corrected him as it was three. Mentioning *Stage Fright*, she said if you looked away you would have missed her, which is, of course, not true as she had a substantial and amusing part. She looked wonderful and I think wanted to talk more, but the questions went back to restorations and questions about violating the original and lot of boring crap. Most of these questions came from people who really seemed to be trying to impress the audience. Georgine brought the house down when Jim Katz asked her to take something out of her bag and she brought out the actual shorts she had worn in the film with the Paramount logo inside. Someone in the audience yelled out $1000 like a bid and it brought a big laugh. Georgine looked great. She must be in her late 60s at least but looked 45 and was as trim as in the film. She said she had married for 7 years and retired, but then divorced and came back to Vegas to work with Jerry Lewis. She is on her second marriage (25 years) and seemed really happy.

Fergal Hughes, Renmore, County Galway, Irish Republic

I recently got to attend a number of the plenary sessions of the recent Hitchcock Centennial Conference in New York. It was damned good, what I remember of it; I didn't take notes and, due to the discovery of a number of good Manhattan pubs, was hungover a lot of the time!

It seemed to me that *Marnie* was a big winner (so-to-speak) ... probably because I was expecting almost everyone to trounce on it.

(Crude paraphrasing of ideas follow:)
ZIZEK: Although I love *Marnie*, I dislike the 'psychological' aspect. As with *Spellbound*, it doesn't sit well that a protagonist be 'explained' by another.
SPOTO: I love *Marnie* ... although I do feel that the 'obvious special effects' were simply Hitch's devil-may-care attitude to the film after his 'to-do with 'Tippi' Hedren.
HUNTER: (repeating what he'd already said in 'Hitch & Me') Hitchcock's reason for making *Marnie* was the rape scene. I couldn't continue with the screenplay because I felt Mark's rape of Marnie was a dreadful mistake; I didn't know how to 'save' his character after that.
ALLEN: The rape scene was only one of the reasons Hitch made *Marnie*. Evan Hunter, although a good friend, is very psychologically naive [giggles from audience]; he doesn't understand that, sometimes, a woman might 'want' to be raped [slightly shocked gasps from audience].

(This last statement I found the most interesting and was amazed when neither I nor anybody else questionned her on it!)

Robin Wood put to Ms Allen that the controversial rape scene in *Marnie* seems to have been shot in such a way as to give two impressions:
1. That Mark (feeling guilty) believes he is 'comforting' his traumatised wife whereas Marnie feels 'raped'.
2. That the moment when Mark embraces Marnie in her mother's house and pats her gently on the head, rubbing her hair tenderly (unlike her mother, who was unable to bring herself to do likewise) is *the* moment the whole film has been moving towards.
Allen agreed on both counts (to Wood's delight).

After Ms Allen's interview, convenor Richard Allen wrapped up proceedings, and invited more questions. Then (after saying 'Robin's going to hate this!') he suggested a conference be held concerning 'Hitchcock Studies' every two years. Actually, I got the impression Wood wasn't so against the idea, as he was in fact the one who suggested the next conference be held in England and titled 'Hitchcock - coming home'.

[Editor's note. Other reports on the NYU Hitchcock Celebration appear elsewhere in this issue.]

Evan Williams, Killara, NSW, Australia

My apologies for taking so long to reply to your letter, Ken. In truth I have been waiting for the video release of Van Sant's *Psycho* to look at it again and refresh my early impressions. I didn't much care for it at first, but a second viewing has inclined me more to your [favourable] point of view. There is a strange fascination about it; and whatever one thinks of the film Van Sant's decision to film it as he did was surely courageous, and to my knowledge, unprecedented. Can you recall another shot-by-shot remake of a classic film? Plenty of remakes, but surely never one like this.

Van Sant was deliberately leaving himself open to all the obvious criticisms: 'futile exercise', 'lack of imagination', 'what's the point of a mere copy?', etc. Was he testing the validity of Hitchcock's original conception by framing the same film in a contemporary context and exploring the reactions of a modern audience? I agree that he catches and expands the note of sadness in the original; Vince Vaughan, a more ordinary and less attractive figure than the perversely charismatic Perkins, is somehow more touching.

But why, if making a shot-by-shot remake, has Van Sant departed from the rule in the two most famous sequences (the murders)? I suggest that the inclusion of 'subjective' flashes - the clouds, the child - is intended to make these sequences a little less brutally voyeuristic, to provide a last insight into the sub-conscious of the victim. The effect is oddly compassionate and unsettling.

I have been asking myself this question: if Hitchcock's *Psycho* had never been made, and all we had was Van Sant's *Psycho*, what would be the general opinion of it? Setting aside casting and performances (important factors, of course), and changes in dialogue (a less important factor, except perhaps in the opening scene, where the differences are quite striking), can it be said that this is Hitchcock's film *as he would have made it today* (in colour, modern backgrounds, a more Nineties feel)? If so, would it be considered a masterpiece? If Van Sant's *Psycho* is inferior to Hitchcock's *only* because it is a remake, what objective standards do we have? If the value of a work of art can never be wholly divorced from its context or its time, I suspect that critical reaction to Van Sant's *Psycho* (if it were an original work) would be fairly negative. If we had never seen Hitchcock's *Psycho* would Van Sant's *Psycho* look dated and strange, or would it seem modern and relevant? Would it shake and disturb us in the same way? Many of the kids who hire the video would never have seen the original (strange as it may seem to us), and one would like to explore their reactions in some depth. My chief regret is that Van Sant chose to shoot in colour. Black and white was such an essential element in the original that its absence seems strange in an otherwise scrupulously faithful reconstruction. The beginning and the ending were both notable: digital technology allowed Van Sant to execute the initial tracking/zoom shot as Hitch would have wished, and the final credit sequence beside the swamp is full of interest. (I waited for a distant glimpse of the car trunk being opened, but missed it!)

[Editor's note. I do think that a review that treated Van Sant's *Psycho* on its own merits, right from the elegiac lime-green of its opening titles, would be more positive than most of the so-far published analyses.]

The NYU Hitchcock Celebration (1)

Report by Jim Davidson

I recently attended 'Hitchcock: A Centennial Celebration', a major film conference that ran from Oct. 13-17, 1999, and was held at the Directors Guild of America Theatre and the St. Moritz Hotel in midtown Manhatten. The conference featured four plenary sessions with the world's top Hitchcock scholars, theorists and biographers, a forum with screenwriters Evan Hunter, Arthur Laurents and Joseph Stefano, and a collaborators forum with actresses Eva Marie Saint, Janet Leigh, Teresa Wright and Patricia Hitchcock. In addition there was a special forum entitled 'French Hitchcock', numerous academic panels at which papers were presented and issues discussed, and the screening of three films, *North by Northwest, Psycho* and *The Birds*. 'Hitchcock: A Centennial Celebration' was sponsored by the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU and organized by Dr Richard Allen, chair of the Department of Cinema Studies. In his opening remarks, Dr Allen stated his belief that in 'the academy' the study of film as an art form has been eclipsed, and that one of his motivations in organizing the conference was to initiate a dialogue between Hitchcock scholars of different points of view.

One of the issues to emerge from the conference was the state of Hitchcock scholarship in the 'post-auteur' era, as academics teaching Hitchcock studies continue to grapple with the extent of Hitchcock's involvement in the creation of the films and his status as the author of their texts. In the opening plenary session, Robin Wood threw down the gauntlet by stating that Hitchcock studies has reached a 'dangerous' phase; Hitchcock's greatness has by now become a given and so scholars are now challenged to come up with continually new things to say about the films without being redundant. As a result, he implied, there is a risk of over or mis-interpretation. Leslie Brill, meanwhile, while differing with Wood on several occasions, suggested Hitchcock scholars stay 'close to the text' of the films. Otherwise, the result is that the 'educational apparatus surrounding the arts acts – mostly unintentionally, I think – to appropriate, tame or neutralize' the films in question.

Conference attendees, many of whom teach college level courses on Hitchcock's films, posed such questions as: what elements in the films have legitimate significance and what are being over interpreted? How much that we read into the films did Hitchcock actually intend us to read? How much personal control did Hitchcock exert over these works in what is a highly collaborative medium? Susan White of the University of Arizona put the question plainly to the panelists at the screenwriters conference when she asked if the letters on the license plates on Marion Crane's car in *Psycho* were intended to have some meaning, or, at the very minimum, were they meant as a self referential joke? Joseph Stefano, the screenwriter of *Psycho*, was unaware that there had even been any meaning ascribed to the license plates ('ANL' and 'NFB'). He stated that - as far as he knew - the license plates were only significant as far as they showed that Marion had changed from Arizona to California plates, suggesting that she had traveled quite a distance from Phoenix.

Meanwhile, at the next academic panel that I attended, Martin Kevorkian of UCLA and Stanley Orr of CBU gave a presentation of the California Mission Revival and its relationship to *Vertigo*. They pointed out during the presentation that Scottie Ferguson drives a DeSoto automobile while he pursues the dreamlike Madeline, and that the use of the DeSoto was significant in linking Scottie and his quest to that of the Spanish explorer of the same name. I had to suppress the urge at this point to leap up and yell out 'Didn't you just hear what Joseph Stefano said? Sometimes a DeSoto is just a car!' While this presentation made some interesting points - although it is terrain that has been often covered before - I couldn't help feel that Kevorkian and Orr had fallen into a trap they could have easily avoided. It is clear, therefore, that up and coming Hitchcock scholars will have to continue to guard against over interpretation in their analysis of the films, or risk damning by association their legitimate arguments with their specious ones.

Throughout the conference, Hitchcock's collaborators attested to the fact that the director gave them a substantial amount of freedom while working on the films. Arthur Laurents, the screenwriter of *Rope*, stated conclusively that Hitchcock had nothing to do with the writing of the script for *Rope* and was only concerned with what the camera would show. Joseph Stefano, as a young writer working on *Psycho*, was amazed at the amount of independence that he had. Though he avoided confrontation in his personal relationships, Hitchcock usually got his way when it came to final decisions about the films. Laurents said that he was opposed to showing the murder of David Kentley in the opening shots of the film, preferring to stay faithful to the play on which *Rope* is based, but that Hitchcock prevailed and the murder was shown. Evan Hunter stated that he had the idea to make *The Birds* begin as a screwball comedy, then slowly turns to terror; while Hitchcock didn't directly oppose him on this point, that aspect of the script was eventually phased out. Hunter also said that the scene in which Melanie and Mitch discuss Melanie's mother at the children's party was not in his script, and that he believes Hitchcock wrote that scene personally and added it to the film.[1]

Hunter did eventually find out what happened when he directly opposed Hitchcock. While working on the script for *Marnie*, he and Hitchcock disagreed over the inclusion of the rape scene during the honeymoon, so Hunter submitted the script with drafts of two different versions. But, he noted, the version without the rape was submitted on white paper and included within the script of the rest of the film, while the version with the rape scene was written on yellow paper and submitted outside of the rest of the script. Hunter feels that Hitchcock took this to imply that the version without the rape (on the white paper) was the correct way to do it, and was what eventually led to his being dismissed as the film's screenwriter. Hunter also stated that until he spoke to Stefano the day of the conference, he had no idea that Stefano had worked on an original treatment of *Marnie*, when Grace Kelly was originally considering the role in 1961. Later in the conference, Jay Presson Allen stated that she was also kept in the dark about the work that Stefano and Hunter had done when she came on board to write and eventually finish the script for the film.

The notion of Hitchcock's need for control was echoed in the opening plenary session of the conference by Robin Wood, who stated that Hitchcock's working methods suggested a form of fascism. Despite this, Wood voiced his admiration for *Lifeboat*, which he called under-appreciated, and commented that the film offers a compelling critique of the American free enterprise system in its depiction of the wealthy character Rittenhouse and his complicity with the Nazi. But even here one cannot help but think of the influence of Hitchcock's collaborators, in this case author John Steinbeck, who wrote the treatment for *Lifeboat* and was well known for his leftist views.

Hitchcock's collaborators were the subject of at least one of the academic panels and mentioned frequently in the second plenary session. Charles Barr, author of the new book 'English Hitchcock', mentioned the importance that screenwriters Charles Bennett and Elliott Stannard had in constructing Hitchcock's early films and the extent to which their influence is unacknowledged even now. He also noted that *Rich and Strange,* long thought to be a semi-autobiographical work, actually stays close to the Dale Collins novel on which it is based. Leonard Leff made the interesting point that Hollywood censors such as Joseph Breen acted as indirect collaborators in the way they forced Hitchcock to rework several films, making their themes more subtle and character motivations more mysterious. Joan Harrison was mentioned as an important collaborator by Donald Spoto. Harrison was also the subject of a paper delivered at one of the academic panels, as was Saul Bass, John Michael Hayes and Edith Head. And of course, Alma Reville Hitchcock was mentioned frequently as an important collaborator. Patrick McGilligan noted Charles Bennett's statement that Alma was 'just put on the payroll', but the general consensus was that she was very important to Hitchcock as a hands-on collaborator during the British years and that, while her day-to-day presence diminished during the American years, she remained a significant presence in his work and life.

Again and again as the conference went on, particularly during the plenary session mentioned above, a variety of Hitchcocks seemed to emerge. To Spoto, who was quick to point out that he actually knew Hitchcock later in his life, the director 'lived his 80 years in an envelope of unimaginable pain.' Spoto believes that Hitchcock wanted to be thought of as a respectable bourgeois, but that at home he sometimes lived the life of a crude, vulgar Cockney. This account was contradicted by the person at the conference who knew Hitchcock best, his daughter Patricia, who stated that home life with her parents was quiet and orderly. Peter Wollen made the interesting comment that Hitchcock did all he could to 'Americanize' himself while he lived in England but, once he moved to America, he clung to his English ways. Wollen also suggested that Hitchcock's Catholic background had more of an effect on his personality than his Cockney upbringing. Patrick McGilligan, who is writing a new biography of Hitchcock, promised that his book would challenge previously published materials and beliefs about the director. He also stated that 7 or 8 short stories had been discovered that Hitchcock wrote during the 'Henley's period' (while working at the Henley Telegraph and Cable Company from 1914-21) and that a 'very different Hitchcock' will emerge from this era.

As one who does not deal with Hitchcock studies as a profession, I found 'Hitchcock: a Centennial Celebration' to be a fascinating experience, a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with those intimately involved with the director's life and work. For scholars, it must have been a great opportunity to have questions answered and to meet and exchange ideas with others that work in their field. Hopefully, future Hitchcock scholarship will stay 'close to the text' of the films and avoid the type of misinterpretation that has appeared in the past, with the result being valid new insights into a body of work that continues to interest the public and scholars alike.

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1. Editor's note. I think that Bill Krohn's 'Hitchcock at Work' will state conclusively that the scene was written by Hitchcock's friend, noted English writer and man of letters, V.S. Pritchett.

The NYU Hitchcock Celebration (2)

Report by Sarah Nichols

Every evening, around 11:30, I watch 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents'. His familiar shadow fills the frame; it has somehow become a part of my own shadow, my own life. I sense that for not a few of the attendees at the Hitchcock conference (held in New York this past October, sponsored by New York University), this has happened also. We have studied and dissected his work so voraciously that we feel him to be a part of us, a shadow and a body merged with our own, but at the same time, more malleable: a shapeshifter who will conform to our individual needs and philosophies as scholars, critics, and film lovers.

It is not so much that our identities are erased when we watch a Hitchcock film; rather, they are marked by it, and, in the most profound instances, we take what we see into ourselves. We carry the film around in our heads, where it unrolls, endlessly. We experience new shocks of recognition, and we subject the film to new interpretations.

There were few 'new interpretations' at the New York conference; some fine papers were given (one, presented by Susan White of the University of Arizona, examined how faces in Hitchcock's films act as receptacles for the interior lives of the characters and reflectors of the situation [and the culture] in which they live). Others waded and drowned in the muck of structural and psychoanalytical theory (an example, from a paper on *Vertigo*, given by Calvin Thomas of Georgia State: 'The nun symbolizes symbolization itself'[1]), providing evidence for Robin Wood's claim, made at the first plenary session, that most academic writing on film is for the express purpose of 'showing off' to other academics.

The plenary sessions provided most of what was worthwhile at the conference; they offered glimpses into lives and persons that had been indelibly marked by Hitchcock, either through their working with him or through their critical studies. A few highlights:

* Robin Wood, announcing that Hitchcock studies were in a dangerous state, and yet not offering any real remedy

* Donald Spoto, whose view of Hitchcock's life and the people in it was shamelessly proprietary

* The Writer's Panel, with Arthur Laurents, Joseph Stephano, and Evan Hunter, Laurents being less enthusiastic than the others about his work for Hitchcock on the screenplay for *Rope*: 'I think that if you rejected his ideas then you rejected him ... he wasn't interested in the words.'

* The Actor's Panel, with Eva Marie Saint, Teresa Wright, Janet Leigh, and Patricia Hitchcock-O'Connell. A fascinating and lively account of a director and a father, with Ms. Hitchcock-O'Connell wishing that she had been cast in more of her father's films

* Jay Presson Allen, recounting her experience of writing the *Marnie* screenplay: Hitchcock was 'a great teacher' but 'my own take on the film is that it's not a very good one ... I thought she ['Tippi' Hedren] was miscast.' When asked about the obviousness of much of the rear projection in the film, and if it had any significance, Ms. Allen replied that 'Hitch was very thrifty.' None of Allen's comments, however, stopped Robin Wood from speaking for many in the audience when he told her that the film was an 'unqualified masterpiece.'

The conference ended, and the seal on a rarified atmosphere lifted. It was time to go home; back to the routine of teaching and study, back to places where movie stars and screenwriters rarely come. But Hitchcock's shadow follows us, and we carry him home.

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1. Editor's note. I think the speaker may have been referring to Lacan's notion of the Symbolic, seeing the authority-figure of the nun as its enforcer. But I take Sarah Nichols's point, and am sympathetic.

Hitchcock's Screwed-up Screwball? - Notes on *Mr & Mrs Smith* (1941)[1]

Article by Philip Kemp

WHY DID HITCH DECIDE to make, of all things, a screwball comedy, with not a murder, a corpse, or so much as a pair of handcuffs in sight? His standard reason - as a favour to Carole Lombard - doesn't seem quite convincing; and

anyway, we know that Hitch's comments in interviews can't always be relied on. Was it one of his series of self-challenges, just to see if he could do it? Or an attempt to get away from the straitjacket of thrillers? This was only his third American picture, and he may have hoped he hadn't yet been typecast. ('If I seem doomed to make only one type of picture,' he later gloomily remarked, 'the movie audience is responsible.' And the producers, he might have added.) Or was it a bid to show he could make a movie in a thoroughly American genre? (Random thought: what would a Hitchcock western have been like?) Or was it the subject matter - an opportunity for another of his acrid studies of marriage as a battlefield?

Is the film a failure as a comedy? Robin Wood: 'An almost painfully unfunny screwball comedy, the film's peculiar character - its thin and crabbed distinctiveness - develops out of a direct conflict between auteur and genre.' Wood goes on to compare it with Leo McCarey's *The Awful Truth* (which has a very similar plot) adding 'McCarey's genius being as compatible with the genre as Hitchcock's is alien to it'.

Of course Hitchcock could do comedy - look at *The Trouble with Harry*, *North by Northwest*, etc. In fact apart from *I Confess* and *The Wrona Man*, it's hard to think of any of Hitchcock's mature work that's wholly devoid ot comedy. But screwball was a very distinct and formalised genre, which by this late stage (1941, nearing the end of the cycle) had developed its own style and conventions. Hitch famously told Truffaut that 'I didn't understand the type of people who were portrayed in the film' -meaning, surely, not well-off New Yorkers, but screwball comedy characters.

Mr and Mrs Smith follows all the screwball conventions. We get the comedy of public embarrassment (the scene at the department store), offbeat dialogue ('She once chased a dog-catcher half a mile with a baseball bat') and characters (the little man from Nevada, played by screwball regular Charles Halton), sight gags (the key at David's club), physical discomfort (the fairground scene where Ann and Jeff get trapped on the big wheel).

And in its plot *Mr and Mrs Smith* fits perfectly into the screwball mainstream. One of the most common themes of the genre is the comedy of remarriage, where an estranged, separated or divorced couple have to be brought back together again, usually by eliminating the wife's stuffy or wimpish suitor. Besides *The Awful Truth* there's *Twentieth Century*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *His Girl Friday*, *The Palm Beach Story*, *I Love You Again*, *My Favorite Wife*, etc, etc. The process usually involves humiliating the suitor, as here with Gene Raymond's hapless (and apparently gay) Jeff. In all these films, the message is that despite the seeming antagonism between them, the original couple are true soulmates.

Yet *Mr and Mrs Smith* really isn't very funny. Why not? Maybe Wood, though over-severe on the film, had a point - there's a basic incompatibility between director and genre. Screwball is superficially subversive, but fundamentally conservative. Hitchcock is the reverse - seemingly conservative (look at the Magritte-like way he dressed) but fundamentally subversive. Screwball is essentially benevolent, romantic: it nearly always ends with the uniting - or reuniting - of the central pair. Its key concern is with courtship rituals, and the final joining together feels reassuring. Hitchcock's slant on such last-reel unions generally has a far more pessimistic edge - cf. *Blackmail*, *Sabotage*, *Suspicion*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Notorious*, *Marnie* - what future can we expect for these couples? Do any of them suggest happy ever after?

Perhaps Hitchcock was just too *knowing* for the screwball genre. 'He makes it quite clear that the woman is a monster, and the film leaves a sharp, bitter aftertaste.' (John Russell Taylor) *Mr and Mrs Smith* lines up with *The Ring* and *Rich and Strange* in leaving us doubtful that the reconciliation can hold - Hitchcock's bleak, even ruthless take on marriage prevents the comic closure from coming across as convincing. Consider Ann's pronouncement on the married state in general: 'Doubt, distress, going on at each other because it's the easiest way.'

Hence the film's increasingly uncomfortable feeling. It starts quite well, but around halfway something seems to go wrong with the momentum of individual scenes. Several times - e.g., the scene of Jeff getting drunk, or the noisy plumbing in the office washroom - we're left waiting for a final clinching gag that never comes. And after the action moves to Lake Placid the situations become steadily more contrived, and the laughs are few and strained. It seems less that Hitch didn't understand his characters as that he never believed in them, or cared about them. And since he doesn't, neither do we.

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1. [Editor's note. A synopsis of the film appears later in this issue.]

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BOOK REVIEW

Naremore, James: 'More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts' (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1998; 359 pp, pb)

Reviewed by Freda Freiberg

Like the English word black, the French adjective *noir* embraces aesthetic, moral, emotional and racial categories. It typically refers to the absence of light, the darkness of night, in which the outlines of things are obscured, and identity is difficult to discern. A gloomy mood, a macabre imagination and immoral behaviour are all described as *noir*. In painting, literature and film, white artists have long exploited the association of blackness with villainy, corruption, decadence, depression, and death, creating potent melodramatic and expressionistic effects. Only recently have the racist implications of these associations become apparent - what *noir* might mean for *les noirs*, black people.

One of the strengths of this new survey of *film noir* is its sensitivity to the issue of race. Naremore admits that both the concept and the cult texts of classical *film noir* were creations of white male Europeans and Americans. He rightly

recognises that *films noirs* could be translated as films made by blacks; and proceeds accordingly to examine a broad spectrum of films directed by Afro-Americans. These aren't confined to films that could be described as neo-noir or as containing black revisions of classical white *film noir* motifs and styles - although Naremore is especially interested in this category.

But race is just one of the issues that Naremore explores in a book that ranges far and wide. Because he views *film noir* as 'only a discursive construction' (rather than a historically specific genre, style or cycle), albeit one with 'remarkable flexibility, range and mythic force', he covers sixty years of American film production, embracing modernist and postmodernist texts, classical noir and neo-noir, B&W and colour movies, as well as a similar span of critical discourse. He traces the discursive, political, stylistic and industrial history of American *film noir* over these sixty years, relating the films and their critical reception to their social, cultural, political and industrial contexts. Each of his seven chapters is devoted to a different theme. In turn, they survey and explore the history of the concept of film noir; the hard-boiled fiction of Hammett, Chandler, Cain, and Greene, and its filmic adaptations; forms and effects of moral and political censorship on studio-era noir; economic and industrial issues; styles of noir; representations of racial difference; and the place of noir in an enlarged contemporary mediascape. He himself says that an alternate sub-title of the book could be 'Seven ways of looking at American film noir' (p8).

In the course of these thematic explorations, Naremore makes passing reference to hundreds of film titles, but devotes more extended treatment to a few films which he presents as outstanding or exemplary cases of the theme under discussion. Thus, the original script of *Double Indemnity* is presented as a powerful modernist text with a biting social critique, in which American hard-boiled fiction (represented here by Cain and Chandler) is inflected by Weimar cinema motifs and an alienated émigré view of American society (contributed by Wilder). The film also serves to exemplify negative and positive effects of censorship. *The Blue Dahlia* and *Crossfire*, two early postwar films about neurotic war veterans faced with re-adjustment to civilian society, are examined as case studies of censorship. *Detour* is discussed as an exceptional instance of low budget noir. *Out of the Past* receives detailed analysis as an exemplary case of the use of lighting and editing in classic B&W noir. *Chinatown* is discussed as the most innovative and politically incisive of the retro-noir cycle of films which emerged in the Seventies. *The Glass Shield* and *Devil in a Blue Dress* are isolated as examples of 'the most impressive Afro-American movies about crime' which share 'a high degree of artistry, plus a tendency to refigure or transform the familiar patterns of noir.' (p 246) David Lynch's *Lost Highway*, Steven Soderbergh's *The Underneath* (a re-make of Siodmak and Hellinger's 1949 film, *Criss Cross*) and Billy Bob Thornton's *Sling Blade* are discussed as three different recent examples of art-film noir.

Despite his measured scholarly tone and avoidance of the movie buff's rave-or-rejection mode of appraisal, it becomes clear, especially towards the end of the book, that he greatly admires certain films and dislikes others. He has respect and affection for movies which bring a European artistic sensibility and a critical social perspective to work on popular genre conventions. He has strong reservations about the films of the movie brat generation, movies about other movies. He clearly is more attuned to modernism than postmodernism, wants movies to say something about the real world, not just play clever games. The Afro-American films he approves are not just nostalgic and not just about movies; they address the real condition of blacks in America. He becomes quite hostile towards some popular recent films. Unlike *Chinatown*, *LA Confidential* 'uses the past superficially and hypocritically' (p 275) . *Basic Instinct* is deemed a perverse and pornographic reworking of Hitchcockian and Sternbergian narrative (p 264). In comparison to *Double Indemnity*, *Body Heat* has a conventional narrative, familiar characters and a merely decorative location (p 263). He concludes that 'most examples of neo-noir are less artistically sophisticated and politically interesting than the films they emulate.' (p 262). Sexual politics seems not to count as politics. Having conceded that classical *film noir* was often misogynist and homophobic, he oddly refuses to see the unvanquished *femmes fatales* of *Body Heat* and *Basic Instinct* as significant post-feminist narrative shifts.

One wonders if Naremore would have identified the misogyny and homophobia in classic era movies without two decades of feminist film criticism - which he fails to include in his initial survey chapter on the development of the discourse on film noir. Later, as a prelude to his discussion of the race issue, he briefly acknowledges feminist work on noir, deeming it ambivalent and inconclusive. Perhaps he feels that the terrain of gender has been too well covered; this is implied when he asserts that in reference to noir the race issue has been comparatively neglected. But, it seems to me that both the resurgence of interest in classic film noir and the popularity of neo-noir movies with audiences (and film students) over the past twenty years resulted to a large extent from the work of feminist and queer film critics and theorists. Employing a variety of approaches (sociological, psychoanalytic, structural and post-structural) , they revealed that the texts were driven aesthetically and emotionally by white male fears and desires, and that the place of woman in the text was to service those needs. Certainly, an initial concentration on the sadistic male gaze, seeking to pursue, investigate and tame or punish the independent woman, gave way to identification of an equally strong male masochism. But these theories were tested out on classic *noir* films, and the debates were accompanied by, in fact necessitated, repeated viewings and close analysis of noir texts.

The feminist enterprise aside, Naremore has covered the ground exhaustively, researching the histories and pre-histories of his subject comprehensively and intensively. He has researched the industrial archives, the censorship archives, the literature on modernism and post-modernism, 50 years of male film criticism on noir (in France, Britain and the US), classic and recent American hard-boiled literature and the history of film technology, in addition to viewing hundreds of films and reading the critical literature on them. He not only summarizes the pre-existing literature on his subject but uses his research to refute some of the prevailing myths about or around film noir.

Firstly, he contests the widely promulgated belief that *film noir* was adapted from low-status pulp fiction. His research leads him to place Hammett, Greene and Chandler inside the modernist literary scene and to claim that they enjoyed a respectable reputation among the literati. Secondly, he contests the association of classic noir with low budget filmmaking. By carefully examining film budgets and industrial strategies, he demonstrates that all the cult noir movies, with the exception of *Detour*, were medium to high budget films. Thirdly, he refutes the identification of noir with a particular style of filmmaking - distorted angles, deep shadows, outdoor night locations, abrupt editing. He argues that the style of classic noir movies was in fact very varied, that many of them were shot in the studio and used the camera in quite straightforward or conventional ways. What unites them is less a common style of filming than a common visual iconography, which persists through the B&W era into the colour era and beyond.

With its extensively researched coverage of a broad span of films and issues, this book is a useful addition to the proliferating literature on *film noir*. Because it situates the films historically in their social, cultural and industrial contexts, it pursues issues neglected by the practitioners of close textual analysis (of both neo-formalist and psycho-analytic persuasions). Its meticulous documentation, measured scholarly tone and elegant jargon-free prose make it ideally suited to the undergraduate film education market. It is more scholarly than the popular cult literature on noir and more accessible than many other academic books on noir which employ difficult theoretical concepts and highly specialized terminology.

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'For the Love of Fear'
Conference and forums in conjunction with the exhibition 'HITCHCOCK: Art, Cinema and ? Suspense'
Museum of Contemporary Art, Circular Quay, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
Friday 31 March, Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 April, 2000

Friday 31 March
3.00pm - 5.00pm Level 3 Galleries
Moral Hallucination - Confessions
Exhibiting artists Rosemarie Laing, Robyn Stacey, Sandy Nicholson and Andrew Hurle discuss the work of art as a perfect crime with Edward Colless, Senior Lecturer School of Art, University of Tasmania and MCA Guest Curator of Moral Hallucination
Cost: Free with Conference fee or gallery admission

Saturday 1 April
9.00am - 6.30pm Level 6 Northern Harbour Terrace
For the Love of Fear - The Hitchcock Conference

9.00am - 9.30am Registration
9.30am - 9.35am Welcome by MCA Director Elizabeth Ann Macgregor

This session is presented in association with the University of Western Sydney
9.35am - 9.45am Introduction by Dr Helen Grace, University of Western Sydney
9.45am - 10.15am Dr Peter Hutchings, Faculty of Humanities, UWS Hawkesbury
'Modernity, a film by Hitchcock.' Alfred Hitchcock began his screen career as a writer of inter-titles, progressing through art direction to direction. The inter-titles in his films are notable for their compression and wit, yet he had been inspired by F.W. Murnau's *The Last Man* (1924) with the idea of a silent cinema without inter-titles, one which would make meaning through purely visual means. This ambition works alongside his attention to the technologies and visual impact of odernity, and his exploitation of the characteristically modern effect of shock.

10.15am - 10.45am Dr Barrett Hodsdon, freelance film scholar examines Hitchcock's influence in Australia
10.45am - 11.00am Questions and discussion

11.00am - 11.30am Morning Tea

This session is presented in association with the University of Technology Sydney
11.30am - 11.40am Introduction by Professor Elizabeth Jacka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney
11.40am - 12.10pm Michael Eaton, noted English screen writer, discusses the filmic conflict between spectacle and narrative with reference to his original screenplay, 'Drella and the MacGuffin', in which Warhol and Hitchcock meet.

12.10pm - 12.40pm Dr David Boyd, Department of English, University of Newcastle.
In his paper '*Spellbound*, *Vertigo* and the Parted Eye', Dr Boyd examines the similarities between these two films, particularly Hitchcock's manipulation of barely concealed Oedipal scenarios as part of an affective strategy.
12.40pm - 1.00pm Questions and discussion

1.00pm - 2.00pm Lunch

This session is presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney with support from The Power Institute of Contemporary Visual Culture
Introduction by Elizabeth Ann Macgregor. MCA Director
2.00pm - 2.30pm Dr Barbara Creed, Cinema Studies, Fine Arts Department, University of Melbourne. Dr Creed will speak on 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Surrealists'.

2.30pm - 3.00pm Dr E. Ann Kaplan, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Stanford University New York, Stony Brook, USA and Visiting Fellow at Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University.
Dr Kaplan discusses trauma and melodrama in Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound*.
3.00pm - 3.15pm Questions and discussion

3.15pm - 3.45pm Afternoon Tea

Presented in association with the Australian Film and Television and Radio School and Macquarie University, Sydney
Introduction by Jane Mills, Head, Screen Studies; Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Sydney
3.45pm - 4.15pm Dr Patrick Crogan - Senior Lecturer in Screen Studies at AFTRS.
'Between Heads: Thoughts on the Merry Widow tune in *Shadow of a Doubt*' examines the passage between sound and image in Hitchcock's early American 'classic' *Shadow of a Doubt*, with reference to Gilles Deleuze.
4.15pm - 4.45pm Dr William Schaffer, Film Studies, English Dept, University of Newcastle
In 'Cutting the Flow: violence, gender & privacy in *Psycho*', William Schaffer proposes new perspectives on *Psycho* as a powerful and suggestive exploration of cinematic obsession within the limits of privacy, gender and violence. The paper proposes an original analysis of the 'shower scene' where Hitchcock's perverse genius is expressed in the unfolding of divisions between inside and outside creating a uniquely evocative image of fascination and fear.
4.45pm - 5.15pm McKenzie Wark, Senior Lecturer, Department of Media and Communications, Macquarie University
In 'Knowing Too Much: Hitchcock's Media', Wark discusses the way that Hitchcock's films are populated by people who, like the filmmaker himself, work in what we would now call the media. He discusses problems of the image, the copy and the reliability of information which occurs over and over again in Hitchcock's films.
5.15pm - 5.30pm Questions and discussion

5.40pm - 6.30pm Drinks on the Terrace

Conference Fee: $100 ($60 students and other concession) includes lunch, refreshments and admittance to galleries on 31 March, 1 April, 2 April.

Sunday 2 April 11.00am - 1.00pm Level 6 Northern Harbour Terrace
For the Love of Fear - The Psychiatrist and the Crime Writer
Stephanie Winfield and Peter Corris

Stephanie Winfield is a psychiatrist, a visiting lecturer in the School of Philosophy at the University of Sydney and is currently completing her Doctorate in Philosophy at UNSW. In her work in contemporary philosophy of mind, she is focussing on theories recently employed to explain a particular delusional belief, the Capgras syndrome, in which someone believes that another person, usually someone well-known to them, has been replaced by a double. She will examine the vulnerable Scotty who becomes trapped in a 'vertiginous regression to a primitive solipsistic state' in *Vertigo*.

Peter Corris, author of 46 books of fiction and 12 non-fiction titles is best known for his 23 books about Cliff Hardy, the Sydney private detective. He will screen the scene in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* where James Stewart and Doris Day arrive in Marrakesh. He will describe the impact of the film, which he first saw this as a fourteen year old in relation to Hitchcock's influential principle that things are never what they seem.

Sunday 2 April
2.30pm - 4.00pm Level 6 Northern Harbour Terrace
For the Love of Fear - The Panel
Edward Colless, Curator of Moral Hallucination, and John Conomos, media artist, critic, writer and Lecturer in Film at Sydney College of the Arts, discuss Alfred Hitchcock and contemporary Australian visual culture. Discussion chaired by MCA Director Elizabeth Ann Macgregor.

Cost: Free with Conference Fee
Day ticket for Sunday's sessions only: $20 (includes admission to galleries). Concession $15

4.00pm -5.00pm Drinks on the terrace

Conference fee Saturday 1 April 2000 $100 ($60 for students and other concessions) includes lunch and refreshments on Saturday, free entry to Moral Hallucination Gallery talks on Friday 31 March as well as full-day program on Sunday 2 April.

Day ticket for Sunday's sessions only: $20 ($15 for students and other concession) which includes admission to exhibitions for that day.

Mr and Mrs Smith (1941)[1]

Article by Inge Izzo

MR AND MRS SMITH seems at first glance a light comedy satirising a couple who play silly games with each other. Hitchcock himself admitted to Truffaut that he did not understand these characters, but there is no doubt that he spiritedly charts the hidden energies which drive them. Often through visual rather than verbal details Hitchcock creates a film which is more multi-layered than a cursory viewing would suggest.

The fortunes of Mr and Mrs Smith, or David and Ann, hinge on the sudden appearance of a Mr Deever, who informs each one separately that they are not in fact legally married. The film then proceeds to track the wanderings of each half of the couple until the two are made one again at the end.

It seems to me that *Mr and Mrs Smith* is constructed on the pattern of the fairy story, 'The Three Wishes'. This familiar tale concerns a poor married couple . There are two versions in folklore, one where the husband makes the first wish and ends up with a sausage attached to the end of his nose (Joseph Jacobs), and the other where the wife makes the first wish and ends up with the sausage dangling on the end of *her* nose (a version reported by both Freud and Bruno Bettelheim). In both cases the third wish is needed to bring the situation back to the original status quo. Hence the three wishes have been effectively squandered.

I would argue that Krasna/Hitchcock opt for the second version, which actually renders the husband less blameworthy, a view which may seem at odds with a superficial viewing of the film, where David's wish miraculously comes true (through the appearance of Mr Deever) and seems a slap in the face to Ann.. On closer inspection, though, it is Ann who makes the first wish.

David and Ann's relationship is a warring one, a common enough feature of screwball comedies. The film opens in their bedroom, with many references to previous such sieges, where the couple lived out their rule of not parting until they have made up. This time, a half-hearted reconciliation takes place, with David appeasingly calling Ann 'mother' and 'my little girl' (in fact anything but 'woman', but more on that later), both inadequate non-sexual terms to use for one's wife. Ann rather smugly philosophises on her recipe for a happy marriage: respect for each other as individuals and 'always tell the truth no matter what the consequences.' Little does she know she is inviting 'consequences' which will split them apart. Ann's 'rule no.7' asks for complete honesty and this is where the argument of the film, and its 'Three Wishes' parallel really begins.

In the 'Three Wishes' folktale a good fairy grants a poor married couple three wishes. The outcomes are as follows (in the Freud version):

1. First, the wife wishes for some sausages.
2. Second, the husband, angered by her foolish wish, himself wishes a sausage to attach itself to her nose.
3. Third, they agree to wish for the sausages to disappear. Thus they have wasted all three wishes.

Similarly, in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, Ann makes the first wish :

1. I wish to know the truth. (Ann wishes for the truth/sausage).
2. I wish I had not got married. (This second wish , made by David, rebounds unfavourably on Ann. I'll bet she didn't expect *this* reply. The sausage is now dangling on Ann's nose).
3. I wish we could get back together again. (This third wish, implicitly wished by both characters, provides the impetus for the film.)

Each half of the couple is given a chance to be free of the other. The film humorously explores Ann's dissatisfaction with Jeff as an alternative suitor, and David's discomfort at being single and available, a newly-minted bachelor. The splitting of the couple is symbolically rendered by a nice visual detail: Mr Deever hands back two *single* dollar bills. If Ann and David are to come together again, they will need to reconstruct and reinvent their relationship, learning to value what was good and jettisoning what was bad in their past marriage.

Freud brings an illuminating perspective to the 'Three Wishes' story when he explores it in relation to the mechanics of anxiety dreams. 'This fairy tale might be used in many other connections; but here it serves only to illustrate the possibility that if two people are not at one with each other *the fulfilment of a wish of one of them may bring nothing but unpleasure to the other.*' (Freud, p.253-4) (my emphasis). This is definitely relevant to wish-making in *Mr and Mrs Smith*. Freud further develops his argument to show that wish no.2 is actually a *punishment*: 'The fried sausages on a plate were the direct fulfilment of the wish of the first person, the woman.' (that is, Ann wishes for the truth. And let us remember that it *is* Ann, not David, who wants to play 'rule number 7' David's weary reply is 'Not again.')

Freud continues: 'The sausages on her nose were the fulfilment of the wish of the second person, the man, but were at the same time a punishment for the woman's foolish wish.' (Freud, p.256)

When the couple are ostensibly 'reconciled' at the beginning and having breakfast, it is obvious from David's anxious face and uneasy silences that he has wearied of Ann's games. She is making all the rules, and it seems these always lead to a marital quarrel.. He feels her accusations and jealousies are not merited, saying, 'But I was only 21...' Thus his reply about not wishing to be married comes as a climax to all the minor irritations preceding it.

Furthermore, he blames Ann – 'You wanted me to answer truthfully because we respect each other, we're honest with each other.' Her own words are thrown back at her, and implicit in this is the idea that she has brought the punishment on herself. David's reply that he would prefer not to be married is a wish 'most disagreeable to his wife'. Ann's reaction is anger, just like the wife in the fairy tale who finds herself sporting a sausage on the end of her nose. Thus the second wish is indeed a punishment meted out by David, in answer to his wife's first and foolish wish.

The appearance of Mr Deever is not strictly essential to the structure of the 'Three Wishes' parallel, as the damage is done by the time David gives his 'honest' answer. However, Deever's news permits the second wish to be played out with all its ramifications, that is, it allows the film to set up a 'what if ..?' situation and explore its implications for each half of the couple. Hitchcock puts Ann and David under the microscope to observe their behaviour, and each one finds they are only half a unit without the other.

Ann huffily makes a grand gesture by flaunting David's best friend and partner as her new beau. However, poor Jefferson Custer proves time and time again that he is lacking in all David's qualities, good as well as bad. Ann describes him as 'kind, simple and gentle', but she knows these are not qualities that will set her heart afire. Jeff himself has no delusions, and this is why his comic moments of ineptitude never sink into pathos or humiliation . He knows Ann and his best friend should be together: 'My first wish is to see you happy,' he tells Ann. 'And it's more than possible that as peculiar as David is, you still couldn't be happy without him.'

David, on the other hand, surreptitiously enjoys the idea of having a wife and mistress in one woman. Equality (so valued by Ann) is all very well, but the erotic pleasure principle must also be alive in a successful marriage. David's foray into the sexual singles jungle is his friendship with Chuck. The latter's relaxed animal sensuality is foreign to David who is awkward and easily shocked, as for example in the steam-bath scene: 'I thought there was a woman in here!' Chuck

quickly sees through David's obfuscations : 'Yeah, I had a fight with my wife too.' But even David momentarily lights up when Gertrude tells him he has a 'nice voice' However, the single life leaves David miserable and jealous and it won't be long before he finds a way to split apart the happy couple at Lake Placid.

The sexual nature of Mr and Mrs Smith's problems is hinted at throughout the film. David's pen is a running gag, being either non-existent (Davis signs in pencil), or else it is tossed back by Ann (an implied sexual rejection of David). However, Jeff fares no better as his inadequacy is comically suggested by his mimed inability to light Ann's cigarette at the Florida Club, the cigarette being a classic sexual symbol in movies of the forties. Epithets applied to Ann move through 'sweet kid', 'mother', 'my little girl', until finally she is accused by Jeff's parents of being a *woman*, heralding Ann as a sexual being. Even the rather surreal appearance of the children staring at the couple at Momma Lucy's are a silent accusation of the couple's childless state. This is counterpointed with Deever's earlier insistence that his sister Bertha has four children.

As the film progresses, Ann learns that Jeff is not her 'lifesaver' (these candies are advertised on the Ferris wheel behind them), and David learns a different way of looking at things from Chuck (not all is negative in the Chuck episode). Each will bring added self-knowledge when the final reconciliation is reached.

Although Ann and David individually learn that they can only be happy if their couple is reformed, it is telling that an actual 'remarriage' ceremony does not take place. The exact, pre-'Three Wishes' status quo is not regained, and it appears the couple will have their sausage and eat it too! This is a slap in the face to all the parents in the film, and the prevailing morality of society. Ironically at the end, Mr and Mrs Smith are no longer married, and yet their bonds are stronger than ever.

The title itself undergoes a transformation. When David and Ann reclaim their privacy behind the crossed skis of the last frame, they also reclaim a more sexually charged relationship. The title *Mr and Mrs Smith* now takes on its illicit, anonymous connotations (as if the pair were checking into a hotel for a secret liason), thereby restoring the missing erotic dimension to this couple. Hitchcock's subversive attack on traditional morality should not go unnoticed.

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1. [Editor's note. A synopsis of the film appears below.]

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Some thoughts about Hitchcock's *Mr and Mrs Smith* (1941)

Article by Ken Mogg

[*Synopsis of the film. Lawyer David Smith (Robert Montgomery) and his wife Ann (Carole Lombard) live in a Park Avenue apartment and sometimes quarrel, as married couples will. So far they've always made up. One day, David learns that a technicality means that their marriage isn't legal. Unknown to him, Ann also finds out. When, without saying why, he decides to romance her all over again, the plan backfires because Ann, insecure and fiery, resents being a potential 'squeezed lemon'. She throws him out. Now David really must court his wife - but she has tasted the thrill of independence. She takes a job as a sales clerk, though David soon has her fired. Also, she encourages the attentions of David's partner, Jefferson Custer (Gene Raymond). Custer's parents take their son's half-hearted romance seriously. They invite the couple to stay with them at the ski resort of Lake Placid, but David turns up, pretending to be suffering from pneumonia brought on by lovesick drinking. Ann can't help feeling concerned. Jefferson, rather wimpishly, doesn't intervene. David traps Ann in her skis, tips her over, and makes love to her. She reciprocates.*][1]

> David gets Ann clumsily into a pair of skis, which function much like straightjackets do in *The Moon's Our Home* [1936] and *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* [1938]. She's unable to walk away or even stand up, a constriction that enables David to get his ex-wife into a half nelson and lock her legs around a post. 'Someday when your back is turned, I'll stab you!' she cries in a fury. The threat signals to her husband, and to the audience as well, that this infuriated, defeated woman does indeed plan to spend her life with the one man who enrages her like no other.
>
> - Ed Sikov[2]

IN SHORT, SHE LOVES him. Probably these two separated spouses have been fated all along to get back together. 'There's a destiny that shapes our ends', Shakespeare wrote, 'rough-hew them how we will.' Less poetically, but to similar effect, David's men's-club acquaintance Chuck Benson (Jack Carson) had made light of David's predicament. 'Simplest thing in the world - ignore it', he'd advised.[3] Still, nothing is certain. Neither David nor Ann is what you would call the passive type. Ann is especially headstrong. Soon events in this screwball comedy are threatening to separate the Smiths for good.

So conflicted do both Ann and David become that they often speak and act in contradictions. In the final scene, even as he removes his tie and prepares to make love to his wife, David tells her, 'Don't think you're doing me any favours by staying here.' And she replies, 'We see eye to eye.'[4] In many ways, the Smiths are a typical wealthy-bourgeois couple. Both learn that neither really knows his/her own mind, and both are discomfited to find how insecure he/she is. Ann's line about seeing 'eye to eye' picks up on the charming moment in the opening scene where, after David's trick with a slammed door, the pair do indeed lock eyes, smile, and put their latest quarrel behind them. But Ann's look of relief at this moment betrays her basic fear. So what makes the Smiths so insecure? The film seems to offer several reasons. For instance, after three years of childless marriage, both partners have been showing signs of restlessness. Over breakfast, a contrite David admits, 'I shouldn't be jealous so much, and I should lay off your family.' In turn, his remark raises the unanswered question, what has *Ann* been up to?

As a film about an erring couple who finally get back together, *Mr and Mrs Smith* echoes *Rich and Strange* (1932).[5] There's also a reverse-echo. If such films as *Secret Agent* (1936) and *Spellbound* (1945) are about 'trial marriages', *Mr and Mrs Smith* is about a trial *un*-marriage. Even more basically, Hitchcock films in which the characters don't know, or can scarcely control, their own minds and impulses, are legion. Such a film is *Champagne* (1928), which has its own headstrong heroine, played by Betty Balfour. Writing about that film's near-surrealism in 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', I commented that few of us are ever sure about the nature and limits of our self-knowledge, especially where our libido is concerned.[6] As a corollary, few things that Hitchcock shows us, or tells us, are ever clear-cut. For instance, is Ed Sikov correct in saying that the last scene of *Mr and Mrs Smith* shows a woman who is defeated?[7] Isn't it equally possible that she is a woman triumphant, who has subconsciously sought this reconciliation from the moment she saw what David was playing at on the night he took her back to Mamma Lucy's restaurant (where they'd had their first date), and she subsequently threw him out of their apartment to teach him a lesson? If David's little trick with the slammed door had earlier brought them back together, seeing eye to eye, doesn't the rest of the film achieve the same result at a deeper, more ineffable level? Shades, in fact, of *The Birds* (1963), which repeats on an apocalyptic scale the gag Mitch plays on Melanie in the pet shop in the opening scene.[8] Let's investigate ...

* * *

> Like screwball's narrative of re-'marriage', Hitchcockian romance works to bring characters back to a point where reality can be added to what had previously been only a theatricalised simulacrum of that reality.
>
> - Dana Polan[9]

> Let us now glance at the relation between romantic and conjugal love. Romantic love remains constantly abstract in itself, and if it able to acquire no external history, death already is lying in wait for it, because its eternity is illusory. Conjugal love begins with possession and acquires inward history.
>
> - Søren Kierkegaard[10]

Mr and Mrs Smith has several ingredients of a crowd-pleaser. According to Sikov, the film played to sellout crowds at Radio City and became, if not a total smash, a solid commercial hit on its general release.[11] Significantly, of all the Hitchcock films that were given radio dramatisations in the decade 1941-1950, only *Rebecca* seems to have been broadcast more often (at least six times, as opposed to at least five times for *Mr and Mrs Smith*).[12] Though Hitchcock announced during the first week of shooting that he wanted to direct a typical American comedy about typical Americans, it seems legitimate to think that other, more universal concerns - for example, to show the very psychology of marriage - also engaged the filmmakers. Such substantial concerns by Hitchcock had already been apparent in a film like *The Farmer's Wife* (1928) where the process of Farmer Sweetland's inward transformation, his gradual and unconscious acquiring of humility, is central.

Also, *Mr and Mrs Smith* contains audience-pleasing features from earlier Hitchcock films that engage us in their own right even if they're not exactly serious or substantial. The first of Hitchcock's films to contain the 'trial marriage' theme was *Mountain Eagle* (1926), in which Beatrice and Fearogod live together for convenience in his remote cabin and then get married to avoid any scandal. Their plan is to obtain a divorce later if necessary, though in the event they stay married. Meanwhile, the film has trod a knife-edge of propriety, something that its director always favoured! Another 'trial marriage' film, *The 39 Steps* (1935), is the best instance of that, its unmarried hero and heroine spending much of the time in enforced intimacy, handcuffed together. According to John Russell Taylor, Hitchcock nearly added a scene at the end in which Hannay whimsically tells Pamela that they're *already* married, since by Scottish law you can be married by declaration, stating yourselves before witnesses, as they had at the inn, to be man and wife.[13] Then there was *Secret Agent*, in which 'Ashenden' and Elsa pose as husband and wife and take the opportunity to sleep together. Only at the end of the film do they formally get married.

Some of these ingredients, then, anticipate or match those of screwball comedy. As a 'trial *un*-marriage' film, *Mr and Mrs Smith* seemingly reverses the basic situation; nonetheless, it warrants the description 'comedy of re-marriage' applied to several representative screwball comedies by Stanley Cavell. So, too, do the already-mentioned *The Farmer's Wife* and *Rich and Strange*. Now, what it means to call *Mr and Mrs Smith* a trial un-marriage film is approximately this: David and Ann really do love each other but they haven't yet tested their love and therefore haven't yet grasped its true nature. They must find out, in Kierkegaard's terms, the difference between romantic and conjugal love. A hint of what is to come is given in another moment of significant eye-contact. In the office of Ann's boss, Mr Flugel (Francis Compton), David calls Flugel an 'old goat'. Ann can't help catching her husband's eye in amused acknowledgment, even though, nominally, the pair are at loggerheads. Thus we're tipped off to their likely reconciliation by the film's end. There's some foreshadowing here of *Family Plot* (1976), where the hitherto-bickering Blanche and George finally 'move as one' and thus defeat the villains, literally on the latter's own terms.[14]

This is again typical of screwball comedy. As crowd-pleasing comedies go, Leo McCarey's *The Awful Truth* (1937) is exemplary, so madcap are its improvisations and so joyous to behold the understanding between stars Irene Dunne and Cary Grant playing the estranged husband and wife who will be reconciled and sleep together at the film's end - ironically, at the very moment their divorce becomes official. *Officialdom* is typically the villain to be defeated in screwball comedy and for much the same reasons that Kierkegaard found repugnant 'everything which is official'. 'The official', he wrote, 'is impersonal and therefore the deepest insult which can be offered to a personality.'[15]

I mention *The Awful Truth* because of its obvious influences on *Mr and Mrs Smith*, scripted by Norman Krasna. Of course, Hitchcock's film has its own special qualities, such as how it juxtaposes subjective points of view that also represent audience sympathies - a matter to be discussed below, where I'll suggest that Hitchcock's interest in subjectivity ran at least as deep as Kierkegaard's, and with an anti-officialdom stance to match.

Several commentators have felt impelled to note that *Mr and Mrs Smith* has been undervalued critically. It works best, I believe, if you approach it on its own terms, neither as pure screwball nor as typical Hitchcock, but as a sagacious blend of the two. One defender of Hitchcock's film was David Thomson in 'A Biographical Dictionary of Film' (1976). Calling it 'underrated' , he thought it hinted at 'how well [Lombard] and Hitch might have worked together'.

* * *

> Screwball comedy owes so much to Carole Lombard's looks and gestures that one could almost say that she defines the genre - the way clothes fall on her body, the colour of her hair, the way she laughs, the confident manner with which she delivers ridiculous lines.
>
> - Ed Sikov[16]

Neither Lombard nor Montgomery gets to deliver a Shakespearian soliloquy, exactly, in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, but each has at least one notable solo moment. Montgomery does a very funny mime when, at the Florida Club, David seeks to make Ann jealous by pretending to be in conversation with a statuesque blonde (Georgia Carroll) seated at his table.[17] Montgomery's comedy technique is in evidence throughout the film. There's a scene outside a department store where David and Ann start to argue, attracting a crowd. When a policeman arrives, David reacts by immediately turning *away* from the cop, thus appearing even more exasperated - and avoiding what would have been the actor's predictable response. Likewise, there's the moment in a steam-room at the Beefeaters Club where Chuck Benson phones a girlfriend named Gloria (Patricia Farr). When the number answers and Chuck responds excitedly, 'Gloria?', David, nearby, is

startled and sits up to see if there's a woman in the room. But he first looks not towards Chuck on the telephone but in the opposite direction ...

In the same scene, Chuck arranges a date for David. This is Gertie (Betty Compson, the former British star), who will be his companion for the evening at the Florida Club. On the phone, she immediately flirts with David, praising his (i.e., Montgomery's) 'nice voice', and kissing at him. Montgomery seems a natural for screwball comedy, though he'd made just one or two such films previously (e.g., Edwin Marin's *Fast and Loose* [1937]), and only got the part in *Mr and Mrs Smith* because several other actors, including Cary Grant, weren't available.

Carol Lombard, though, was decidedly a veteran of the genre (e.g., Gregory La Cava's *My Man Godfrey* [1936], William Wellman's *Nothing Sacred* [1937]), which may explain why she'd asked Hitchcock to direct her in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, wanting to please her fans with more of the same. Her memorable solo scene is the one near the end where, ostensibly to give David reason to leave in a huff, Ann feigns that Jeff is mauling her. 'Don't Jeff, don't', she cries, using a girlish voice that David seems to find irresistible - more than once he has called her 'a great kid' and his 'little girl'. When he comes charging to Ann's rescue, he finds her alone in her room. Yet the half-nelson he applies seems more an embrace than a remonstrance. Finally, he up-ends her in her skis. Here, a photogenic view of Ann's haunches certainly echoes the famous scene in Howard Hawks's *Twentieth Century* (1934) in which 'Lily Garland' (Lombard), wearing satin pyjamas, bends her legs and kicks out at her obnoxious actor-manager Oscar Jaffe ...

The sheer physical attractiveness of Lombard had also been emphasised during the scene in Jeff's apartment after Ann and Jeff got drenched at the New York World's Fair. Ann makes her intentions apparent by immediately eyeing the bedroom and declaring it 'the most tasteful man's bedroom I've ever seen'. To this compliment (if that's what it is) Jeff merely says, 'Thank you', and refuses to take the bait - exactly how he'll respond for the rest of the evening! But for now, he excuses himself to 'get into something more comfortable', which gives Ann time to remove her coat and start to dry her hair before the fire. Her gown with its plunging back, and the attractive look of the shot itself, suggest that she's readying herself for a pleasant time *chez* her host. Here Hitchcock lets the scene's atmosphere build, just as he'll do in a matching scene in *Vertigo* (1958).[18] Comically, when Jeff returns, he's wearing evening dress, as if to go out again. But the fast-thinking Ann prevails on him to stay indoors and take some brandy. Accordingly, despite it's being apparent by now that Jeff's no Lothario, when he tilts backwards and says in an ominous voice, 'Miss Ann', we allow ourselves to hope that he's about to kiss her. Sadly, he merely excuses himself again, this time to throw up ...[19]

Lombard took full advantage of her status as the film's uncredited producer. During the shoot, she good-humouredly insisted on directing Hitchcock's cameo appearance as a passer-by in the street outside the Smiths' apartment when David and Jeff emerge together.[20] Lombard ordered retake after retake! However, this was not originally where Hitchcock's cameo was to go. He had intended to appear outside Mamma Lucy's as a panhandler who unsuccessfully tries to cadge from David the price of a drink.[21] In that scene now, a little man wearing a bowler hat goes by. Bill Krohn, who told me this, thinks that Hitchcock simply dressed an actor up as Stan Laurel and had him walk on in Hitch's place![22]

* * *

> The rule of law degenerates [in *The Awful Truth*] into farce as the two adults do battle in court for custody of their dog, Mr Smith (played by the personable Asta of the *Thin Man* series and, later, *Bringing Up Baby* [1938]). The judge, unable to decide the custody fight on his own, becomes an effective symbol for empty law and collapsing order when he finally leaves the matter up to the terrier.
>
> - Ed Sikov[23]

There's another moment in *Mr and Mrs Smith* involving eye-contact, and that's when David and Ann at Mamma Lucy's attempt to out-stare some street urchins who have gathered to watch them dine *alfresco* at a table on the footpath. The pair lose the contest, an instance of how children in Hitchcock's films sometimes get the better of adults because children are more spontaneous or because they apparently 'know something' that adults don't. A moment later, David is even complaining that the restaurant's cat knows more than he does about the (off-colour?) food. The pair's tribulations - there will be more - signal that their precious marriage is coming apart, that they're no longer moving as one. Aware of the potential for such a thing to happen, Ann had earlier sought to impose a series of rules or laws on their relationship, but such 'legality' had been no substitute for the spirit of true marriage.[24] Hitchcock would see fit to employ a similar theme again when dealing with marriage matters, notably in *Marnie* (1964) with its play on the term 'legal possession'.

The Awful Truth again offers a precedent. In the courtroom scene, Lucy (Dunne) tricks the judge into giving her possession of the dog called Mr Smith by surreptitiously coaxing it to come to her. In *Mr and Mrs Smith*, the law is

mocked when the Smiths' marriage is held to be invalid because of a technicality: this forces lawyer David to get involved in areas where he must needs operate in unorthodox ways, not strictly legal. Such pointed ironies often occur in Hitchcock films. The ambiguous shot in *The Paradine Case* (1947) of the statue of blind Justice over the Old Bailey is not so far removed in its implications from the shots in *North by Northwest* (1959) of the Presidents 'overseeing' events at Mount Rushmore. There's a similar occasion, mocking 'officialdom', in *Mr and Mrs Smith* where events at Lake Placid occur in and around the lodge whose cabins are all named after Presidents. Equally, there's a key motif in films like *To Catch a Thief* (1955), *The Wrong Man* (1956), and *The Birds* (1963), that might be called 'temporal justice versus eternal justice', and which I've analysed in 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story'.[25] As it happens, another recent book, 'Fiction and the Law', by Kieran Dolin,[26] deals with similar matters. Dolin sees the concept of law as ultimately a 'nomos', a 'normative universe ... a world of right and wrong, of lawful and unlawful, of valid and void'. This concept of the nomos represents a much broader understanding of law than mere judgements laid down in particular cases, for it is intended to capture the very antinomies, often shadowy, that are involved. Dolin feels that only through fiction can a multi-layered and nuanced understanding of a nomos be fully apprehended.[27]

Indeed, he thinks that the best evidence may come through 'telepathy'. To illustrate this, he focusses on the Marabah caves incident in E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' (1924) and on the subsequent courtroom scenes that are finally so destabilising of the imperial Anglo-Indian nomos that has prevailed. (It's relevant to recall that Robin Wood evokes the Marabah caves incident when describing Lydia Brenner's ineffable anguish in *The Birds* when she finds the body of Dan Fawcett.) Next, Dolin highlights the way that fiction lets in what law deems to be inadmissable. This time, one of his object-cases is Charles Dickens's 'mighty mystery of Iniquity and Equity', 'Bleak House' (1853), the very novel that Donald Spoto feels 'engraved itself on Hitchcock's memory' and which is surely a major influence on *The Wrong Man*.[28] Much of this sort of apprehension of a desirable nomos by a work of fiction does seem to me inherent in Hitchcock's filmmaking. By the end of *Mr and Mrs Smith*, the film has become, arguably, something of a Blakean parable of innocence regained, a 'higher' innocence. The resulting marriage-state is far from being a paradise, but David and Ann now have a finer and deeper appreciation of what they mean to each other. This goes way beyond a simple matter of 'legal possession'.

The actual dynamics of the film are complicated. For example, Dana Polan seeks to distinguish David, because of his surname ('Smith'), from 'the old aristocrat', his legal colleague and friend, Jefferson Custer. But this simplifies matters. David and Jeff both attended the same school together in Alabama. Both now live in New York City. And 'Smith' is actually an English name. One notes that David's club is called the Beefeaters Club and that among the portraits that hang on David's office walls is one of Shakespeare (and another, I think, of either Byron or Keats). Another complication is that the ordinary Yankee, Chuck, attends the Beefeaters Club too. Accordingly, the situation may be this. David is positioned between the over-gentlemanly, by-the-book Jeff, on the one hand, and the uncomplicated, macho Chuck, on the other. The film associates David with things English partly because, like even Chuck, he is a would-be social climber (Chuck admires anything or anyone with 'class'), but also because he is eminently civilised, in the best Hitchcock tradition. Typically in Hitchcock's films to this time, the English represent the most civilised race. Thus it seems fitting that, at David's office, his job of lawyer requires him to be controlled and courteous, even at some expense to his 'virility'. (Jeff, naturally, is fully at home here!) But you always sense that David has what it takes. In this respect, he's like Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps*, who is a Canadian but as civilised - and capable - as they come.

There's another aspect of the name 'Smith'. In the film's title it seems to identify David and Ann as typical, even ordinary. That sounds vaguely pessimistic. Yet, as noted, *Mr and Mrs Smith* belongs in the comedy-of-remarriage genre whose pastoral idea, or 'green world', *optimistically* offers 'perspective and renewal', as Stanley Cavell says.[29] In point of fact, the film's ending is ambiguous. If a 'higher innocence' is being held out, it may be, for most of us, only a fleeting one that we glimpse before reluctantly (though exuberantly) coming back to the real world.[30] We need to remember that Hitchcock in private rather looked down on 'the moron masses' who comprised the bulk of his audience.[31] Accordingly, 'average' characters like David and Ann are finally just pointers to a 'paradise' beyond their present experience - though, it's true, this has lately been privileged.[32] The 'green world' becomes in Hitchcock a limbo. And *Mr and Mrs Smith* (or *Mr and Mrs Ordinary*), while implying the possibility of something more, and extraordinary, is just a hinting. A whole new nomos remains to be established.

* * *

> Conjugal love does not come with any outward sign, like 'the rich bird' with whizzing and bluster, but it is the imperishable nature of a quiet spirit.
>
> - Søren Kierkegaard[33]

> The institution on which the Family in bourgeois capitalist society depends - legal marriage - appears flagrantly neurotic, its sole function being to make it more difficult for couples to separate if they are miserable.
>
> - Robin Wood[34]

Hitchcock's films have always seemed to me to reflect an affinity of their director to that supreme exponent of subjectivity - and hence the Romantic outlook - Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55). Consider *Vertigo*. Its 'pessimistic' ending may serve as a profound rebuke to those of us who cling, Hamlet-like, to this worldly life and refuse to make the 'leap' into faith which for Kierkegaard constitutes the true religious outlook.[35] For clearly Scottie's vertigo carries a suggestion of cowardice, and Madeleine's other-worldly quality is one that the 'hard-headed' Scottie both finds intriguing and yet, because of his cowardice, devalues: he has wanted to save Madeleine for *this* world rather than accompany her into another, to truly 'know' her mystery. By the time that Judy appears in the film, it is already 'too late' for Scottie, for his notion of his lost Madeleine has been coarsened into purely physical terms (Madeleine as the archetypal cool blonde), an image or simulacrum of what she might originally have given him.

I don't make this reading of *Vertigo* lightly. I detect a similar hinting at something ineffable beyond normal or ordinary comprehension in *The Manxman* (1929), *Under Capricorn* (1949), *The Wrong Man*, and *Marnie*. For instance, Manny in *The Wrong Man* simply cannot grasp the nature and magnitude of what befalls him, though the film takes pains to suggest the massive forces bearing upon him from all sides.[36] Manny clings for refuge to his Catholic faith and his rosary, but the film leaves ambiguous the true nature and depth of that faith. Is he, then, just one more of Hitchcock's 'moron millions'? After all, Kierkegaard, anticipating Nietzsche in this respect, saw *all* official religion as an abstraction, lacking the subjectivity of the true religious outlook.

I also think of *Psycho* (1960), hinging as it does on the Miltonic paradox of whether to act ('leap') or 'wait'.[37] Marion Crane, whom Hitchcock described to Truffaut as 'a perfectly ordinary bourgeoise', i.e., probably another of 'the moron millions', becomes impatient, and pays the extreme penalty. Later on, Lila Crane indicates that nothing much has changed when she says, 'Patience doesn't run in my family'.[38] (Likewise, in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, David ignores Chuck's injunction to wait for Ann to get over her wrath ...)[39] So when, in dialogue and imagery, the film compares Marion and her sister to angels, the effect is striking but ambiguous. If they're angels, Marion and her sister are nonetheless of the lower orders who simply serve as messengers of God's worldly purpose, not the higher orders who attend on Him personally and are privy to His thought. Thus *Psycho*, too, presents us with a limbo-world, located somewhere between 'lower' and 'higher'.[40]

Now, Kierkegaard's thoughts on marriage, which we started to examine earlier, not surprisingly bear a relation to his overall philosophy. Roughly speaking, the distinction he makes between romantic and conjugal love parallels his celebrated distinction between 'Aesthetic' and 'Ethical' outlooks - where the Ethical offers decidedly the more mature mode of living. Taking *Vertigo* as an example, we can say that Madeleine arouses in Scottie an Aesthetic awareness (which is already an advance on his purely utilitarian relationship with Midge)[41] akin to romantic love. But, as Kierkegaard indicates, such love without real commitment is likely to acquire no external history, and its eternity is illusory. Fittingly, perhaps, Scottie loses Madeleine. True, he had told her that he *was* committed to her, after saving her from drowning, but he had mistaken the sham for the real.[42] Likewise, when he does try with Judy to establish an Ethical (caring) relationship, it is again an unreal one.[43] Again he loses the woman he has briefly possessed. Moreover, by the end, a more basic lack in Scottie has been implied. I'll refer to the *religious* symbolism of the mission and its tower below ...

It has to be said, I think, that Kierkegaard has a profounder understanding of conjugal love, and the limits it may finally impose on individual self-knowlege and happiness, than Robin Wood displays in the passage quoted. Still, there's a certain irony in the fact that neither man could actually write from direct experience of the issue, or at any rate, without prejudice. The homosexual Wood's view of (heterosexual) marriage as 'neurotic' sounds a little like sour grapes on his part, or a projection of a neurosis of his own, or both those things.[44] Yet Kierkegaard himself never married, and he broke off his engagement to Regina Olsen after proclaiming that he was 'a thousand years too old' for her. (As we'll see, he had his reasons.) Nonetheless, our knowledge of such opposing views (i.e., Kierkegaard's, Wood's) may help to suggest a play of polarities that I think is operating in *Mr and Mrs Smith*.

Let's come back to that film. In David and Ann we certainly detect few 'outward signs' of 'the imperishable nature of a quiet spirit' - only much 'whizzing and bluster'! Yet, as always in Hitchcock, it's conceivable that outward events carry an essentially opposite, and invisible, meaning. Another of the film's moments involving eye-contact occurs when Ann pointedly avoids looking at David, and, over his shoulder, tells Jeff that she accepts his invitation to dinner. She is

sending messages to both men at once, but the one to David is richer and deeper (and as so often in such cases, requires a sense of irony for its correct interpretation).[45] It means, in effect, 'Just wait until all this is over!' That 'wait' is crucial. Both David and Ann undergo a learning experience in the film, and it involves the importance of waiting.[46] Now, I have little doubt that Hitchcock's attitude to marriage and sexuality (insofar as matters of the libido can ever be definite and certain) resembled that of his favourite painter, Paul Klee (1879-1940). Just before World War I, Klee was friends with a 'Sturm und Drang' artist whose life was indeed a willed storm of feelings and activity, including sexual activity. But soon, Klee noted, there was nothing new left for the artist and his sexual partners to try! By contrast, Klee himself, who was always devoted to his wife, Lili, soon happily came to see marriage as 'a sexual cure'. Monogamy, he felt, was 'enough'.[47] What I'm suggesting apropos *Mra nd Mrs Smith* is simply that Hitchcock would have seen in the Smiths' marriage both its dangers of disintegration *and* its potential for something stable and lasting - and that the film at least hints at the latter possibility.

The fact that it culminates in scenes set at a place called Lake Placid is typical of Hitchcock. The overt, *non*-placid content of these scenes rather implies an opposite state as being desirable or attainable, maybe already, if invisibly, existing or coming into being. The inspiration for this particular setting was probably the first film of skating star Sonje Henie, Sidney Lanfield's *One in a Million* (1936). That film had centred on the Winter Olympics, held at Lake Placid the same year. Hitchcock may have begun by reasoning that the location in New York State would provide a change from the Connecticut climaxes of other screwball comedies like *The Awful Truth* and Hawks's *Bringing Up Baby*. Later on, when making *Spellbound*, he again thought of using Lake Placid as a locale within his film, though he finally chose 'Gabriel Valley'.[48] Structurally, either locale serves as a 'lost paradise' image. That's something that constantly recurs in Hitchcock's work.[49] It carries great psychological acumen, and in *Spellbound* Hitchcock was even able to give it a Freudian underpinning: the Gabriel Valley sequence, with its flashback to Ballyntine's childhood, effectively evokes original sin.[50] There's an obvious connection with what I've already written above about the quest for a higher innocence.

The most 'placid' character in the Lake Placid scenes of *Mr and Mrs Smith* is Jeff, and he is mocked.[51] The film doesn't exactly endorse placidity even if it posits (as I've been doing) placidity as a goal. This paradox is like that of life itself: the ubiquitous life-force in Hitchcock's films (e.g., *Lifeboat*, *Spellbound*, *Marnie*) is constantly shown to veer between storm and stillness.[52] But always these films have a *transcendent* implication. Theirs may be the Surrealist goal, expressed by André Breton, of attaining 'a certain point of the mind where life and death, the real and the imagined, ... cease to be perceived as contradictions'.[53]

The events that happen at Lake Placid are engineered by David. When Ann and Jeff first turn up there, they learn that their rooms at the main lodge have been mysteriously changed to cabins half a mile away. 'That's funny', says Jeff, but he accepts the switch, only pausing to express a puritanical hope that 'they're not connecting rooms, are they?' It's appropriate to Jeff's concern that all of the cabins are named after American Presidents, i.e., father-figures! On arriving at Cabin McKinley, Ann and Jeff are startled to find that the cabin next to theirs is occupied by David. Standing in the snow to greet them, he appears literally frozen, or drunk. As they approach him, he falls forward. They carry him indoors.

Ann soon betrays her concern at David's condition, reminding us of her remark in the opening scene about mothering him.[54] Now follows a key episode where she shaves David propped up in bed. We already know that she had regularly shaved him when they were married. The act has faintly sexual connotations, something which Hitchcock would exploit further in *Spellbound*, *The Paradine Case*, *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest*, and *Topaz* (1969). At the same time, Jeff is roped into playing manicurist to David! The cunning David, who is supposedly still unconscious, not only lies back and enjoys the attention he's receiving, he does his best to protract it. In this, he's like a film director who grasps that the more screen-time a character is given, the more an audience will become interested in him, and even identify with him. Ann is his audience! She and David (if not Jeff) are in perfect empathy during the delicate business of shaving: at one point, she screws her face to one side, inviting him to 'make like this', which he does. Clearly, there's an overlap with the scene in *Spellbound* of Ballyntine and Constance skiing in unison, and with the close-ups in *The Birds* of the pair of identically swaying lovebirds.

By the very next scene, Jeff is acknowledging to Ann that 'it's possible' that she still loves David and that he, Jeff, may be an interloper.

In sum, the Lake Placid scenes reflect something of the calm certitude with which a gifted director can lead his audience where he wants them to go. It's this same calm certitude that I feel Hitchcock's films are often about, thematically.[55]

* * *

> [Kierkegaard's] concern with subjectivity opened the way to a new kind of philosophical sensibility and a new consideration of the value of the human individual. But the same concern with subjectivity also produced some dubious although deeply interesting implications, for Kierkegaard believed that truth is truth for a subject; otherwise it is empty. This seems to obliterate any distinction between how things seem to be and how they may be in reality.
>
> - Diané Collinson[56]

As well as its several instances of eye-contact, or avoided eye-contact, *Mr and Mrs Smith* has much use of subjective camera, in which the audience is, actually or metaphorically, put *behind* the eyes of one of the characters. Rohmer and Chabrol note this departure from the usual way of American (screwball) comedy, which 'gets its effects from the assumption of objective observation: it is a report on madness'.[57] They instance the scene at the Florida Club, one typical of Hitchcock in switching its narrative point of view midway.[58] 'During the first part of the scene, we have shared [David's] embarrassment and then his triumph.' This refers to how in order to impress Ann, David has pretended to be accompanying the classy blonde. But later, when he develops a nose-bleed, and his actual date, Gertie, goes to work on him to stop it, Ann thinks that he looks ridiculous. Now, say Rohmer and Chabrol, 'we find ourselves on the other side of the fence, with [Ann]. This leap from one "subjectivity" to another sparks laughter, but it is not cathartic laughter since we feel that we are mocking ourselves.'[59]

To perform her ministrations, Gertie forces David to lie on his back. All the points-scoring over Ann that he had managed in the early part of the scene is worthless to him now that Ann sees how absurd he looks (and perhaps realises that he has been with Gertie all along). To drive home to us the matter of David's discomfiture, Hitchcock gives us a canted point-of-view shot from David's perspective of Ann and Jeff looking shocked. Such a subjective shot resembles ones in *Downhill* (1927) and *Notorious* (1946). Notice that the shot is literally from David's point-of-view but is subsumed within Ann and Jeff's general view of events, i.e., this part of the sequence tends to 'side' with them. Then, too, Hitchcock was keenly aware of the *audience*'s subjectivity. For instance, the initial shots of the Florida Club as David follows a waiter across a crowded dance-floor to his table are designed not just to introduce his first view of the group he'll be spending the evening with - Chuck, Gloria, and Gertie - but to establish in the audience's mind a strong sense of place and atmosphere, in this respect recalling the already-mentioned shots by the fireplace in Jeff's apartment. Also, it's probably significant that the crowded dance-floor recalls the one in *Champagne*, a film that is at times subjective in an almost surreal way. There, the obvious and literal subjective shots through an up-ended champagne glass belonging to the mysterious figure called The Man hint at a deeper subjectivity, that of our own mischievous libido ...

The soundtrack, too, can turn subjective. One example of this in the Florida Club scene is the way a modulation of the musical numbers typically suggests the evening's progression, time passing, something that Hitchcock and his composers would also use to excellent effect in *To Catch a Thief* and *The Wrong Man*.[60]

Paradoxically, Hitchcock's capacity to oversee all of these 'subjectivities' suggests his own relative objectivity.[61] But something similar was always a Romantic paradox. Many Romantic figures, from Rousseau ('The Social Contract', 'Émile') onwards, dealt with the broadest of canvasses, yet kept a personal note.[62] Invariably, it was the impersonal that was anathema to them. Now, despite what I've just said about Hitchcock's objectivity, can anyone doubt, as they watch *Vertigo*, his emotional investment in Scottie's attempt, while pursuing Madeleine/Judy, to turn an abstract, impersonal ideal of femininity into a living, fleshly embodiment of that ideal? The fact that Scottie fails in his quest seems to me the very expression of the paradox that is at the heart of Romanticism, if not Hitchcock himself.

Here's what I mean. In 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', I note how Scottie embodies the Romantic flaw of the 'transcendental pretence', the wilful belief that the Self is everything.[63] I took the term from Robert C. Solomon,[64] who has brilliantly put his finger on why the over-emphasis on subjectivity by the Romantics constituted their fatal error. The transcendental pretence, reports Solomon, 'appeared as innocence and common sense, but it embodied a profound arrogance that promoted self-righteousness, prohibited mutual understanding, and belied human diversity'.[65] The Self *isn't* everything, though someone like Kierkegaard came close to believing that it was. Indeed, in the field of 'existentialist' and 'vitalist' thinking,[66] Solomon considers that right up to Jean-Paul Sartre a degree of commitment to the efficacy of the transcendental pretence to reveal life's underlying meaning, or to give that life a meaning it otherwise lacks, prevailed. It took someone like Simone de Beauvoir 'to move beyond Sartre ... in her keen awareness of caring for others and respecting their freedom'.[67]

In particular, Solomon praises de Beauvoir's emphasis on distinctively *female* ways of experiencing the world, something that Sartre ignored. Referring to de Beauvoir's 'Le Deuxième Sexe' (1949), Solomon notes that her 'analysis flies in the

face of the transcendental pretence, for once we acknowledge this one major split in the idea of humanity, it [is] difficult to deny any number of others'.[68] Indeed it is. And it seems to me that though Hitchcock was often prepared to enter deeply into the emotions of his characters, such as Scottie's feelings for Madeleine/Judy, another part of him retained the capacaity to be objective and detached. Especially, he did *not* consistently ignore female and/or feminine experience. For example, in the character of Midge, wonderfully played by Barbara Bel Geddes, he gives us a picture of, precisely, the female and femininity being ignored. The picture is at once subjective and objective. Recall what I said earlier about Midge being reduced to a 'utilitarian' character by her relationship with Scottie. She has become 'utilitarian' - designing brassières, etc. - in both her own and Scottie's eyes, just *because* of the way that he has ignored her essential nature, while he himself has taken to pursuing elsewhere what the film implies is ultimately a chimera, a male construct of ideal femininity. Scottie's subjectivity proves fiercely destructive. Yet the film itself shows us these *women*'s essential nature by reminding us that they, too, are suffering creatures.[69]

In sum, Hitchcock was capable of both deeply understanding, and profoundly critiquing, the transcendental pretence and the way it finally overemphasises subjectivity. How, then, does this cast light on *Mr and Mrs Smith*?

* * *

> The soaking that Ann and Jeff suffer at the carnival represents the final diminution of the tremendous storm that Murnau made the climax of *Sunrise* [1927] and that Hitchcock first adapted to comic and ironic purposes in *Rich and Strange*.
>
> - Lesley Brill[70]

The Lake Placid scenes satisfy us, rather than merely seem contrived, when we grasp that David has set everything up and then let events take their natural course. His plan hiccups when, feigning illness, he gets 'found out'; but all along it has seemed that Ann's unacknowledged thought has been to rejoin her husband and that David would somehow manage it. Mind you, this is never entirely clear or unambiguous. These typical screwball characters scarcely know the depths of their own minds, even if Hitchcock does.[71] When I often speak of Hitchcock's 'outflanking technique' - for example, in discussing *Rich and Strange* - I typically mean his capacity in all kinds of ways to defeat or expose his characters' limited understanding of how things are. Yet it is done with tremendous empathy on his part, amounting to what Keats called a poet's 'negative capability'. It is really a form of genius. Accordingly, I think I see why Hitchcock, when making *Psycho*, apparently identified with the Milton who wrote 'On His Blindness' to justify his inner certitude while waiting patiently to do what God had chosen for him. In turn, I think it very likely that Hitchcock had long ago arrived at what Kierkegaard called the 'Religious' stage of inward development, that which is superior to the Aesthetic and Ethical stages.

Let me refer to something we know about Hitchcock's career. From almost the first moment that young Alfred entered the Famous Players-Lasky studios in London, it was noticed that he possessed 'a master mind'. I think that such a mind was closely connected with his total commitment, almost from the start, to being a filmmaker who had mastered every aspect of his art and craft. I would equate that commitment with Kierkegaard's notion of a 'leap' into faith. For Hitchcock, filmmaking *was* his religion. Just think of some of his remarks to Truffaut, such as how no considerations of morality could have stopped him making *Rear Window*, such was his love of 'pure film'. Hitchcock's characters may not have known their own minds, but Hitchcock always knew his. And he regularly applied that knowledge in what amounted to an ongoing critique of his characters' limited commitments and ways of seeing.

Now, another key scene in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, which I've already briefly mentioned, is the one at the fair where Ann and Jeff get stuck on a broken-down parachute-ascension during a storm. Hours later, wet and dispirited, they're finally brought down. The prominent sign on the nearby Ferris wheel reads 'Life'.[72] In 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', I compare this episode to the home-movies scene in *Rebecca* (1940) where the film breaks in the projector, and I suggest that both scenes work as metaphors 'for the woman's and the man's separate dilemmas. For the woman, there's a reminder of her imperilled marriage - Ann is left feeling literally uncomfortable, if not unbowed. For the man, there's a reminder that life is always forcing itself on us.'[73]

Both of these aspects - the woman's and the man's perspectives - complement each other. The overall message might be: seeking, as we often must, 'any port in a storm', we may find marriage such a port, for 'life' gets very stormy indeed, and even the Smiths' tempestuos marriage is a potential haven from that. Storms, or references to storms, figure in such Hitchcock films as *Rich and Strange*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (both versions), *Young and Innocent* (1937), *Jamaica Inn* (1939), *Rebecca*, *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), *Suspicion* (1941), *Lifeboat* (1944), *Spellbound*, *Under Capricorn*, *I Confess*, *Rear Window*, *Psycho*, and *Marnie*.[74] Discussing this matter recently on the Internet, I invoked what is clearly one of Hitchcock's perennial themes: the working of a life-force that is also a death-force, the immanent

'Will' of the world.[75] The fact that individual characters, such as Fred in *Rich and Strange* and Manny in *The Wrong Man*, never really grasp what is going on is exactly the point Hitchcock makes.[76]

I see *Mr and Mrs Smith* as being, almost surrealistically, about the psychology of marriage, its angsts and its angers, and its often unvoiced fantasies. An example of the latter is David Smith's fantasy of having both a wife *and* a mistress. Hitchcock in his films liked nothing better than to limn the very edges of his characters' consciousness. The broken-down parachute-ascension prefigures a theme of *The Birds*, that catastrophe surrounds us all - even if for most of the time we stay oblivious of it. Further, the scene effectively complements the one in the washroom adjoining Jeff's office, in which the clanking plumbing interrupts the huddled conversation between Jeff and his parents.[77] Hitchcock's intention had been to use the sound of toilets flushing on the floor above; regrettably, RKO insisted on something a little less daring ...[78]

What I'm saying is that Hitchcock, if not his characters, saw the bigger picture, and that his outlook was ultimately a 'Religious' one in Kierkegaard's sense of that term. Here's how Robert C. Solomon describes Kierkegaard's choice of the 'Religious' outlook:

> Although he explicitly contrasts the aesthetic and the ethical in his early works, in his own life it was clear that the choice was more between the ethical and the religious life (he had indulged himself as an aesthete as a youth, but without great success). For the sake of his religion he gave up the considerable comforts and satisfactions of married life. The religious life is one of [deeply personal] commitment to God. But although it was Kierkegaard's personal choice, his philosophy prevented him from ever defending it as the 'right' choice. All he could do was to choose it, live as an example, and 'seduce' the rest of us into choosing it too.[79]

Obviously, this isn't exactly a picture of Hitchcock, married to Alma for more than fifty years. Nonetheless, I do find it suggestive of why Hitchcock's films often seem to speak of something more, or other, that lies beyond the ethical/conjugal sphere. I think that a part of Hitchcock always deeply valued the notion of a person's *subjective* relation to God, a Romantic position, one not based on (for example) merely a mechanical attendance at religious services. Hitchcock deeply loved Alma, of course, yet for most of their married life he adopted a self-described 'celibate' lifestyle that is surely revealing. Author Robert Schoen seems to have felt so: his screenplay-cum-novel, 'Hitch and Alma' (1998) is built on the premise that Hitchcock maintained a 'secret life', hidden from Alma, represented by a hoard of 'alternative' sequences, outtakes from his movies, which he ran to himself in his home screening-room, which Alma was forbidden to enter.

Or consider some of the remarks about marriage that are in Hitchcock's films. Near the end of *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), the mother is heard to murmur that, in marriage, you may very soon 'forget you're you'. In *The Trouble With Harry*, Jennifer and Sam hope, optimistically, that their forthcoming marriage may be 'practically unique', and that they'll get to keep their individual freedoms.

I can't say with certainty that Hitchcock was finally more of a 'Religious' person than he was an 'Aesthetic' or an 'Ethical' one. He was full of paradoxes. George Cukor once called him 'so perverse! He'd never tell you what he really thinks, never, never!'[80] But so was Kierkegaard paradoxical, perhaps finding in subjectivity as good a route to an *objective* appreciation of the universe as any of us may hope for.[81] Also, Kierkegaard loved the theatre and music, yet he observed of art that to the elect it ceased to be any kind of religious ritual and was seen, rather, for what it was, 'an immoral sham, useful only as [an] ... effective method of making the ignorant masses conform to the law of virtue which they do not understand'.[82] In Hitchcock's case, I've suggested that he made of filmmaking a religion; yet he was detached enough to sometimes say that, after all, it *was* 'only a movie'. I would gloss the latter remark like this. To 'the moron masses', as he called them, it was indeed only a movie; and yet to Hitchcock with his 'master mind', the cinema was actually more of a religious calling, and scarcely separable from a religious knowledge. In *Vertigo*, Scottie is repeatedly entering churches *and then immediately exiting them again*. The film seems to imply that his quest has been misguided from the outset, that what he was truly seeking, if only he'd known it, was always close by - or its religious symbols were - but that he has *wilfully* overlooked them.

Ann's crossed skis at the end of *Mr and Mrs Smith* may, or may not, be a Christian symbol. Personally, I don't think so. But you are free to read such a meaning into the image, if you wish. What is scarcely deniable is that the crossed skis - Ann's yielding legs - are a *sexual* symbol, like the last shot of *North by Northwest*. Beyond such a final statement, Hitchcock's films seldom go, only hint at the journey still to be travelled by all concerned and perhaps 'seduce' us into further speculation based on hints earlier thrown out. I have tried to highlight some of those hints and to give them a wider Hitchcockian context. John Mosher in the 'New Yorker' called *Mr and Mrs Smith* '[a]s commonplace a film as one may find anywhere',[83] but I think he overlooked the wisdom that Hitchcock brought to his *investigation* of the

commonplace, the very subject of the film (as its title implies). Hitchcock aficionados may find in this excellent screwball comedy much to satisfy them.

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Notes

1. Synopsis from K. Mogg, 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (London, 1999), p. 76. Note: all citations of my book in these notes will refer to the UK edition, as opposed to the cut and 'simplified' US edition, which I disown.
2. E. Sikov, 'Screwball: Hollywood's Madcap Romantic Comedies' (1989), p. 71. Cf. a recent observation by University of Washington psychologist and marriage counsellor John Gottman, that anger in married couples 'did not indicate an imminent divorce or marital unhappiness - indeed, some of the most happily married couples went at it hammer and tongs'. (The film's Jeff, on the other hand, I see as an early instance of a Hitchcock 'neurotic' - whose most extreme case is Norman Bates.)
3. Chuck's line was incorrectly quoted in my book, p. 77.
4. Another instance of an apparent contradiction occurs when Ann, drenched by rain on the parachute-ascension, assures the mousey Jeff, 'I've never been so happy in all my life.'
5. Not quite so obviously, a similar theme operates in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (both versions). It is also a staple theme of screwball comedies like *The Awful Truth*.
6. Again the screwball genre itself is predisposed to treating similar subject-matter. I think it was Martin Scorsese who remarked in a recent episode of 'American Cinema' that screwball comedies typically show our libidinous impulses. Hitchcock's *Champagne*, it's relevant to note, contains several pre-echoes of Capra's screwball comedy, *It Happened One Night* (1934) ...
7. Sikov is certainly mistaken about one or two factual matters in the passage quoted. The scene where David gets Ann in a half nelson precedes by several minutes the final scene where he traps her in her skis.
8. Melanie is stung by Mitch's teasing into tracking him to his home in Bodega Bay - on which the birds eventually vent their fury.
9. D. Polan, "The Light Side of Genius: Hitchcock's *Mr and Mrs Smith* in the Screwball Tradition", in A.S. Horton (ed.), 'Comedy/Cinema/Theory' (1991), p. 149.
10. S. Kierkegaard, 'Either/Or' (Vol. II: The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage), in R. Bretall (ed.), 'A Kierkegaard Anthology' (Modern Library, New York, n.d.), p. 88. Cf. the definition of successful marriage offered by essayist Lynn Darling: 'an intricate pattern of consideration and savagery that only two human beings moving together through time can produce'.
11. Sikov, p. 66. In contrast, Lombard's earlier *Twentieth Century* (1934) had hardly been a big hit in the cities, let alone in the small towns of middle America (the places that made *It Happened One Night* a huge success), where it bombed. See Sikov, p. 178.
12. Statistics based on those supplied by Martin Grams Jr and published in Mogg, p. 191. I have added one more to the number of times *Mr and Mrs Smith* was performed on radio in the 1940s (Grams lists four occasions), thanks to a tape supplied by Dr Ulrich Rüdel of a 'Screen Director's Playhouse' production on 30th January, 1949.
13. J.R. Taylor, 'Hitch: The Life and Work of Alfred Hitchcock' (1978), p. 130.
14. See Mogg, p. 181.
15. Quoted in W.H. Auden, 'The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard' (1963), p. 27.
16. Sikov, p. 66.
17. David's actual date for the evening, Gertie, is a brunette. The contrast prefigures the two Kim Novak characters in *Vertigo*.
18. The scene in *Vertigo* is of course the one where Scottie brings Madeleine, soaked from jumping into San Francisco Bay, back to his bachelor's apartment, and plies her with brandy. (*Mr and Mrs Smith* has other scenes that anticipate *Vertigo*, notably the one where David trails Ann and she leads him to his own office: 'She's going to visit me.' And the scene on the Ferris wheel, with its subjective shots of the ground, is another.)
19. We'd been prepared for this moment in a preceding scene. On the parachute-ascension at the fair, a rain-drenched Jeff had reached across to help himself to Ann's breast-pocket handkerchief, and Ann had momentarily thought that he was groping her ...
20. This event was chronicled in the RKO short subject, *Picture People*. ('Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia', 1994, p. 536.)
21. Cf Taylor, p. 172. It was Bill Krohn who told me where the cameo was originally supposed to go. See next note.
22. Bill Krohn's 'Hitchcock au travail' (1999) has already been published in France, to considerable acclaim. The English edition is due out in March, 2000.
23. Sikov, p. 37.
24. In the 1949 radio production, the Smiths were called 'a family with a constitution' - perhaps implying that they were representative of the American state itself.
25. Mogg, p. 133.
26. K. Dolin, 'Fiction and the Law: Legal Discourse in Victorian and Modernist Literature' (1999).
27. Dolin's book was reviewed at length in the Higher Education pages of 'The Australian' by Professor Margaret Thornton, on 3rd November, 1999. On the matter of how the law proves less than flexible, or insightful, in particular cases, a similar idea may be seen to operate in such Hitchcock films as *The Lodger*, *Blackmail*, *Murder!*, *The Skin Game*, *Rebecca*, *The Paradine Case*, *The Wrong Man*, and *Vertigo*.
28. I explored the parallels between *The Wrong Man* and 'Bleak House' in 'MacGuffin' 20 (August 1999) and, at less length, in my book, p. 145.
29. S. Cavell, 'Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage' (1981), p. 47.

30. This is roughly consistent with the 'pessimistic' Schopenhauer's view of how art may temporarily free us from our wilful understanding of things. In Hitchcock's case, though, his showmanship and sleight of hand are such that we actually almost welcome our return to 'normality' at the film's end, albeit we may recognise that something definitive (e.g., the essence of a marriage, our unfree condition, etc.) has been shown us. Cf note 62 below.

31. Taylor, p. 181.

32. David and Ann experience a representative series of adventures which show them 'life' (as discussed in the present text) and which teach them a salutary lesson. The same paradigm is found in *Rich and Strange* (where Fred seeks 'more life') and *North by Northwest* (where Roger comes 'alive'). Their privilege is the concentrated nature of what they undergo, and the fact of their surviving it.

33. Bretall, p. 90.

34. R. Wood, "The American Family Comedy: From *Meet Me in St. Louis* to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*", 'Wide Angle' 3, no. 2 (1979), p. 6, quoted in Polan, p. 138.

35. In Hamlet's famous soliloquy on death he speaks of 'The undiscovered country from whose bourn/ No traveller returns .../ Thus conscience [thinking about death] does make cowards of us all ...' Fragments from Hamlet's soliloquy are heard in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *Topaz*. That Kiekegaard's 'leap' into faith (in his case, after breaking off his engagement) still retains an ambiguity, concerning life and death, may be surmised from his remark (quoted in Cavell, p. 43), 'Had I had faith I should have remained with Regine [sic]'.

36. I discuss this matter in 'MacGuffin' 20. Of course, the several forces bearing upon Manny are perhaps really just one force, Schopenhauer's Will.

37. See Mogg, p. 159, concerning Marion's allusion to Milton. Milton's sonnet known as 'On His Blindness' represents the great poet's justification of his decision to bide his time, having confidence that his God-given 'talent' will finally be vindicated (as it was, with 'Paradise Lost'). Milton's is a 'master mind', if ever there were one. Cf. notes 40 and 46 below.

38. This is one of several such remarks in the film (another is Lila's, 'What am I supposed to do - just sit here and wait?') that indicate how impetuous Marion and her sister are - in contrast to the lordly Milton.

39. Once again, David's is the *ordinary* person's response ...

40. In this paragraph, I have tried to clarify the over-concise interpretation of *Psycho*'s 'Miltonic' imagery that I gave in my book. In particular, I have tried to indicate the important distinction between two orders of angels. Milton clearly identified himself with the higher orders, 'who only stand and wait'.

41. I'll say more later in the text about how Scottie has reduced Midge to a utilitarian figure. (His influence on her seems related to how for her he is still 'the only one', even though it was she who broke off their engagement.)

42. The 'Madeleine' that Scottie knows is an impostor, and what she appears to offer him and embody - surely nothing less than the answer to the world's riddle - is, to re-quote Polan's words apropos *The 39 Steps*, 'only a theatricalised simulacrum of ... reality'.

43. Scottie sees in Judy the chimerical Madeleine, and cannot love her until he has made her over in Madeleine's image. In other words, it isn't Judy Scottie loves but an ideal image of femininity.

44. It makes no difference to my estimation that Wood had been married before coming out and declaring himself gay.

45. I have asked myself whether I'm being a male chauvinist - siding with David and wanting to interpret Ann's message thus - but I don't think so. Of course, I recognise that there's a typical Hitchcockian ambiguity about what exactly Ann's message is.

46. This, too, is ambiguous. David and Ann are one of Hitchcock's 'restless' married couples (cf. *Rich and Strange*, both versions of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Wrong Man*) who are shown the risks of their impatience, and have their consciousness raised, at least momentarily, about the value of their marriage. But elsewhere in the present article, I make the point that Hitchcock's characters seldom fully grasp the implications of what has happened to them. The case of *The Trouble With Harry* is slightly different. Using a psychoanalytic perspective, I argue in 'MacGuffin' 21 (February, 1997) that it shows characters re-living the infant's *impatience* with its mother when she doesn't immediately respond to its demands for food. The film is about enduring life's 'in-between periods'. As such, it anticipates the premise of *Psycho* concerning Marion's all-too-human impatience, as opposed to the vision of a 'master mind' like John Milton, whose 'On His Blindness' is about biding one's time, patiently waiting to fulfil one's destiny. Milton 'knew' himself to be one of the elect. Cf. notes 37 and 40 above.

47. The reader will recall that in Hitchcock's case he claimed that his marriage to his beloved Alma was largely 'celibate'. The information about Klee in the text comes mainly from a BBC radio feature, "Going for a Walk with a Line", originally broadcast in the 1980s, I think.

48. L.J. Leff, 'Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood' (1988), p. 125.

49. I give several instances in my book, starting with Hitchcock's first film, *The Pleasure Garden*, and including his penultimate film, *Frenzy*, set largely in Covent Garden.

50. Mogg, p. 96. Ballyntine in *Spellbound* hadn't murdered his brother but might well have, out of 'sibling rivalry' occasioned by Oedipal jealousy.

51. Also mocked, elsewhere in the film, is the meek bureaucrat Mr Deever (Charles Halton).

52. Cf. my discussion of the 'Storm Cloud Cantata' in the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, in Mogg, p. 143.

53. Cf. E. Stern, "Hitchcock's *Marnie*: Dreams, Surrealism, and the Sublime", in the 'Hitchcock Annual' (1999-2000), p.42, where the author quotes Breton's remark apropos Marnie's state of mind after the death of Forio. (I'm not sure of the aptness of the quote in such a context, though.) I also think of Paul Klee's reference to 'those [privileged] artists who penetrate to the region of that secret place where primeval power nurtures all evolution ... the power-house of all time and space - call it brain or heart of creation' ('Paul Klee on Modern Art', 1948, p. 49), or even just of the notion of a still point in a turning world (every meditator's goal). In my understanding, *The Trouble With Harry* speaks from such a place. Cf. note 55 below.

54. In *Rich and Strange*, Emily says, 'A wife is more than half a mother'.

55. For an artist, a special form of 'placidity' may represent the 'still point in a turning world' that balances his active engagement with the kaleidoscopic world of appearances. (Cf. Schopenhauer's notion of the world as both Will and Representation, the one and the many.) This seems to me to square both with Klee's notion of a 'secret place ... the power-house of all time and space' and with Breton's notion of 'a certain point of the

mind where [opposites] ... cease to be perceived as contradictions'. In turn, I'm reminded again of Milton's supreme calmness and detachment, his 'master mind', if you will.

56. D. Collinson, 'Fifty Major Philosophers: A Reference Guide' (1988), p. 109.

57. E. Rohmer and C. Chabrol, 'Hitchcock: The First Forty-Four Films', translated by S. Hochman (1979), p. 64.

58. Interviewed for the 'New York Times' when he was making *Marnie*, Hitchcock dwelt on this aspect of his technique.

59. Rohmer and Chabrol, p. 64.

60. Another form of subjectivity in Hitchcock occurs when a whole film, or a lengthy portion of it, gives a 'portrait' of the main character: e.g., *North by Northwest*, which is effectively a portrait of Roger Thornhill. See Mogg, p. 154. A comparable technique is used by the artist Saul Steinberg (he did the drawings for the credits-sequence of *The Trouble With Harry*) in a family portrait called 'Drawing' where the three persons depicted - father, mother, daughter - is each drawn in a different manner to suit the individual: the father in a commercial-graphic style, the mother in a traditional or 'Renaissance' style, the daughter in a naïf style.

61. Here, I'm reminded of critic Adrian Martin's insistence in a recent article on *Notorious* on its director's capacity to identify 'intensely with each character in turn, sometimes with all of them at once'. Martin continues: 'To me, it is a fantastically polymorphous, frankly bisexual film, in the deepest sense that much great art is. I don't mean that Hitchcock shows characters who are secretly bisexual, but that he lets us get inside everybody's skin and live there, feel there, imaginatively. Hitchcock is sometimes portrayed (unfairly, stupidly) as the rigid, censorious, sadistic purveyor of a punishing, ultra-straight, male gaze; but no one so inflexible in their head or heart could have made a film like this one.' (A. Martin, "Inside *Notorious*", on the 'Senses of Cinema' website: issue number 3) Martin is effectively (and forcefully) attributing to Hitchcock what the poet Keats called 'negative capability', something which I have invoked when writing of Hitchcock previously. I take this matter up in the present text.

[Notes 62-83 will apear in our next issue.]

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ODD SPOT: OO LA LA, TALLULAH!

David Bret's 'Tallulah Bankhead: A Scandalous Life' (1996) claims that the American-born actress (1902-68) had 500 lovers of both sexes. Typically, within days of starting work on the set of *Lifeboat* (1944), she had begun sleeping with leading man John Hodiak. Tallulah was in the news again recently after Britain's Public Record Office released files showing that in the 1920s the government tried to have her deported as a danger to public morality: it seems that MI5 had secretly accused the actress of indulging in 'indecent and unnatural practices' with five Eton schoolboys. Such a news item gives added piquancy to the character Markham's line in *Murder!* (1930) describing his actress wife as 'very versatile - last week she was pure Tallulah!' Still, when Hitchcock cast Tallulah in *Lifeboat*, it was a serious role, more serious than David Bret seems to have realised. On page 150 of his book he writes: 'When [the Hodiak character] loses his temper and one of the others tells him to keep his shirt on, he responds, "I haven't got a shirt ... or a mink coat," at which point Tallulah interjects with, "And *I* thought the common turn [sic] was dissolved."' Perhaps someone should tell Brett about the Russian *Comintern* (the so-called Third International, established in March 1919 to work for communist revolutions) which had been dissolved in May 1943 as a gesture of reassurance to Russia's capitalist allies.

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'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc. should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 177 Simpson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 27 | December 2000 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

Another issue! And very soon another! This 'MacGuffin' will shortly be followed by a book reviews 'special', our attempt on behalf of our readers to ingest and critique the many publications about Hitchcock and his films that began to appear in the Hitchcock Centennial year and are still coming out. (Among books we're looking forward to seeing in 2001 are Steven DeRosa's 'Writing With Hitchcock: The Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and John Michael Hayes' and Gary Giblin's 'Hitchcock's London', full of valuable research.)

Now, speaking of writers, I'm happy to run in this *Torn Curtain* issue of 'The MacGuffin' the chapter on that film from 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992) by Theodore Price. I reviewed Dr Price's now sadly out-of-print book in 'MacGuffin' 12, and I stand by the praise for the book's startling insights and general thesis that I wrote then. The bottom line is that Price has many brilliant things to say, even if sometimes it seems to the reader that he is wrong in his particular emphases (and sometimes is over-repetitive in his emphases anyway). Hitchcock famously declared that 'everything's perverted in a different way' - a statement which strikes me as a key to his work - and it doesn't exactly need a French theorist like Lacan or Derrida to tell us that perceptions made in this supposedly knowable, 'received' world of ours are in fact never absolute. (Just read the poets, for one thing.) Accordingly, when Price finds homosexual connotations in 'innocent' scenes from Hitchcock, he is surely entitled to do so. A scene may actually work as an equivalent of another that remains unshown, its mirror. Moreover, Price clearly anticipated, in a generally more engaging and energetic and 'popular' style, some of the main findings of such Hitchcock commentators as Robert Corber, Robert Samuels, and Lee Edelman. It seems scandalous that none of those commentators have acknowledged Price as their forerunner, and that the academic Hitchcock establishment hasn't taken them to task for the lacunae in their respective bibliographies. Even more scandalous, perhaps, is how the same academic establishment has never given Price's original research and - I repeat - often brilliant insights a fraction of the attention they deserve. But then, this is the Hitchcock establishment that, I'm convinced, has hardly begun to take Hitchcock's measure, either. (See my article, "Will and wilfulness: recent commentary on Hitchcock's *The birds*", to be published on the 'Screening the Past' website, La Trobe University, Australia, from about March.) In reproducing in this 'MacGuffin' the wonderfully suggestive chapter by Price on *Torn Curtain*, I have added several explanatory 'Editor's footnotes'. By the way, not all of those are uncritical of what Price is saying.

A different reading of *Torn Curtain* - but not perhaps incompatible with Price's - is my own "Submission, containment, liberation", here considerably revised and rewritten from the version we printed in 'MacGuffin' 8. (I was younger then, gentle reader, and less knowledgeable.) Also, we print in this issue an extract from the novelisation of *Torn Curtain*, based on Brian Moore's screenplay, that appeared at the time of the film's release in 1966.

One of the best and most solid books on Hitchcock to appear in recent times is Bill Krohn's award-winning 'Hitchcock au travail'/'Hitchcock at Work'. Krohn has sent us a brilliant short essay on *Family Plot* (1976), emphasising the 'resurrection' motif sounded in the funeral scene of that film. Reading the essay, I was immediately reminded of the 'resurrection' motif in a couple of Charles Dickens classics: 'A Tale of Two Cities' (which Hitchcock studied at school) and Dickens's last novel, the unfinished 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'. In the former, the motif is particularly evident, from the Scriptural passage 'I am the Resurrection and the Life' that accompanies the guillotining of Sidney Carton at the end to, less exaltedly, the depiction of Jerry Cruncher, bank messenger by day and grave-robber ('resurrectionist') by night. (As once pointed out in 'The MacGuffin', there are many structural and other parallels between 'A Tale of Two Cities' and Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn*.)

James Vest has sent us a short, acute piece on the way some aspects of France are rendered in Hitchcock's films. Professor Vest and others see the influence of Poe here; I would simply add another name, that of Dickens's author friend Wilkie Collins (who wrote the much-anthologised "Tale of a Terribly Strange Bed", set in a squalid part of 19th-century Paris).

To everyone, good viewing - Ken.

A Hitchcock mystery

By Bill Krohn

The brief chapter on *Family Plot* in my book 'Hitchcock au travail'[1] concerns the divergences between the storyboards for a particular scene and the scene itself. Although the book makes the same point about other Hitchcock storyboards, the case of *Family Plot*, Hitchcock's last film, is special. The idea that a good film could be made 'against' its screenplay became a commonplace among critics for whom mise-en-scène is an art in its own right after Eric Rohmer argued in his 1948 review of *Notorious* that Hitchcock had turned a routine spy thriller into a film about Ingrid Bergman's face, but on the evidence of surviving production sketches, *Family Plot* may be the first film in history to be made 'against' its storyboards.

The style that resulted diverges considerably from Hitchcock's habitual practice as a director: few closeups and even fewer inserts, scenes covered in 2-shots and long shots, pans and zooms replacing the meticulously planned camera moves in the storyboards drawn by Tom Wright, which closely follow the scene descriptions Hitchcock and Ernest Lehman wrote into the shooting script. Late films of great directors have often been surprising, but none ever reversed the premises of his oeuvre as drastically as Hitchcock did in *Family Plot*. It is as if this filmmaker known for planning every detail before the start of shooting had decided, because he was working with a generation of younger actors accustomed to improvisation, to free himself and his characters once and for all from the determinism of his own storyboards.

According to the production reports, Hitchcock began filming in the new style - which involved improvising the blocking of a scene with the actors on the set and picking his shots based on how they moved[2] - while shooting the scene discussed in my book, where Lumley, the sad-sack amateur detective played by Bruce Dern, pursues the widow of a man who died accidentally while trying to murder him through a cemetery in the middle of her husband's funeral. Hoping she will lead him to Eddie Shoebridge, the mystery man he is looking for, Lumley is still unaware that Shoebridge, who doesn't want to be found, was behind the failed murder attempt.

At the beginning of the scene the camera moves to a high angle that shows Lumley pursuing the frightened widow through the maze of paths in the cemetery. Even though biographer John Russell Taylor says that this shot, which Hitchcock called a 'living Mondrian,' was planned months before,[3] according to the production report for the day it was filmed - Friday of the first week of shooting - the first business of the day was to 'Rehearse and take Polaroids of actors and plan layout,' resulting in the actors taking different paths than those shown in the storyboard.

Then Hitchcock, ignoring the camera moves plotted in the boards for the pursuit and the ensuing dialogue, covered the rest of the scene very economically, letting all the dialogue between Lumley and the widow after he catches up with her play in a single shot while the camera panned to follow them. (This one rather ragged shot replaces three tracking shots in the storyboards, the last of which would have required a fair amount of choreography involving both the camera and the actors to bring Lumley and the widow into a tight two-shot at the end of the scene.) He thus covered a complex exterior scene in half the time allotted for it, and half the time it had taken him to film the picture's first scene, between Barbara Harris and Kathleen Nesbitt, on Monday and Tuesday. That weekend he viewed the footage with a group of close advisors that included his wife Alma, and afterward continued shooting in the same style till the picture wrapped.

Production reports can't tell us what was on the director's mind while he was dismantling one of the screen's most recognizable styles, but another change he made in the 'living Mondrian' may give us a clue. Although he had planned that the funeral service would break up after the widow's hasty departure, Hitchcock decided to keep it going when he filmed the high-angle shot and brought back the actor playing the pastor months later to record a longer speech to be heard over the rest of the scene.

The first part of the speech is audible over the 'Mondrian': 'Oh how great the holiness of our God! For he knoweth all things.' (At this point the camera has moved up into the all-seeing perspective Hitchcock always referred to as 'God's point of view.') The voice continues during Lumley's pursuit of the widow, telling how Christ 'suffereth the pains of every living creature' (present tense: the actor might still be talking about the camera's relation to the tiny characters below) '...who belong to the family of Adam. And he does this that the Resurrection may pass on all men, that all may stand before him at the great and judgement day.' (Pursuer and pursued have stopped near the fake grave of Eddie Shoebridge, who has been resurrected, we will soon learn, as 'Arthur Adamson.')

Up to this point the pastor's speech is in ironic counterpoint to what we know about the dear departed, who is not going to come off well 'at the great and judgement day,' and about his 'resurrected' boss, Adamson, a member of the 'family of Adam' whose joyful pursuit of a criminal career stems from sins others committed before he was born. Yet the words spoken over the 'Mondrian' also stir feelings of sublimity with their references to Last Things: Hitchcock's dubbing notes

indicate that 'the sound of the pastor's voice should continue very faintly in the background' as Lumley questions his quarry, and though only snatches are audible, those same notes tell us what the voice is saying: 'There cometh ... a first resurrection ... the resurrection of the prophets, and all those who believed in their words, or all that have kept the commandments of God ... Those that died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them ... have a part in the first resurrection, and have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord. And the little child shall have eternal life ...' This passage draws on a particularly obscure part of the Book of Revelations: John the Apostle's description of a 'first' and 'second' resurrection. Church fathers who believed that the former would begin an earthly Millennium before the Last Judgement tended to limit participation in it to martyrs[4] - I can find no artistic or modern source that comes close to the liberality of Hitchcock's pastor, who is reciting a millennial 'A-list' that includes the Hebrew prophets, virtuous pagans and unbaptised children.

He then concludes, inaudibly except for a few words after the music starts up following the widow's description of Adamson's 'resurrection': 'The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form, both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of our guilt.'

The doctrine of physical resurrection - which is solidly rooted in Christian theological tradition - is only a virtual presence in the scene, but if, as would appear from its many archaisms, the pastor's speech is part of an actual text whose beginning is heard over the 'Mondrian,' it is present nonetheless, and Hitchcock wanted it to be. A practicing Catholic, he knew churchmen who could have supplied him with an historical text expressing ideas about the resurrection that resonated with his hopes and beliefs, to be murmured in the background of this scene which brings together so many mysteries: Predestination and Free Will, Original Sin, the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the Last Judgement.

The 'Mondrian' is also, of course, a metaphor for *Family Plot* itself, in which two seemingly unrelated stories pursue their course like Lumley and the widow - avoiding an early collison, then moving closer along parallel lines until, after a few more near misses, they finally connect. Which means that the design of the film, and the way it was realized through a new insistence on the physicality and the freedom of the actors, are also being commented on by those distant, murmured eschatological themes.

Raymond Bellour observes in an article on *Family Plot*[5] that Hitchcock always had to struggle to keep the geometrical patterns of his films from reducing the people caught up in them to mere 'figures' - 'the actual bodies of men and women being erased by the pressure of the story's logic and the abstract impulses it attempts to inscribe.' Contrary to the legend Hitchcock nurtured about himself, his strategy for modulating the excessive abstraction of his storyboards depended on his actors and his on-set encounters with them. If he allowed that counter-tendency to have its fullest expression in this lighthearted last testament, the mise-en-scène of the funeral sequence can also be said to express his faith that the paths of destiny finally lead to what theologians call the resurrection of the body - which could also be a name for modern cinema in its most radical, and 'un-Hitchcockian,' forms (Cassavetes, Warhol, Pialat, Godard).

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Except where noted, all information in this article comes from the shooting script and from the Hitchcock Collection of the Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles: *Family Plot* files 212 (dubbing notes), 215 (production reports) and 230-1 (storyboards).

Notes

1. Bill Krohn, 'Hitchcock au travail' (Paris: 'Cahiers du Cinéma,' 1999), pp. 274-5.

2. This process is described by the script supervisor in the production report for a scene with Barbara Harris and Bruce Dern filmed the Monday of the second week: 'Rehearse and pick camera sizes [i.e. shots].' By the time 'Variety' reporter Joseph McBride visited the set near the end of shooting and observed Harris, William Devane and Karen Black working out the staging of a scene with Hitchcock, after which the director decided how to film it, the script supervisor was no longer bothering to describe a process that had become routine. Cf. Joseph McBride, "Nothing Will Ever Stop Hitch," 'Variety' 42nd Anniversary Issue, October 1975, 24.

3. John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock' (New York: Berkley Books, no date), pp. 302-3.

4. J. Webb Mealy, 'After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgement in Revelation 20' (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), p. 102, notes that the passage in question 'is by common agreement one of the most difficult in the whole of Revelation.' I have referred to Mealy's history of how theologians have interpreted this passage (Revelation 20: 4-6), and to Caroline Walker Bynum's 1992 study 'The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity,' pp. 200-336, for the

history of the doctrine of physical resurrection.

5. Raymond Bellour, 'Trafic' #26 (Summer 1999), p. 100. Bellour goes on to argue that 'The strength of *Family Plot* is to have stopped ... believing in the characters and to have chosen instead to believe and to make [us] believe in their schematism, giving in to the vertigo of an abstraction extracted directly from [their] bodies...' (Ibid.) My interpretation, which is the opposite of Bellour's, takes seriously Hitchcock's comment to Ernest Lehman, who feared that the director might be giving in to his 'obsession with structure,' while they were working on the script: 'This film is going to be made by its characters!' Quoted from the transcript of a tape-recording of the November 5, 1973, meeting between Hitchcock and Lehman, in Donald Spoto, 'The Dark Side of Genius' (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), p. 561. Hitchcock told Taylor (p. 304) that Barbara Harris had contributed more of her own ideas to the film than any actor he ever worked with.

Footnotes 62-end for article by Ken Mogg, "Some thoughts about Hitchcock's *Mr and Mrs Smith* (1941", held over from last issue

62. Perhaps this emphasis on the personal was a reason the Romantics espoused the thought of Schopenhauer. The latter may be said to have anticipated the 'therapeutic' function (Robin Wood's term) of Hitchcock's filmmaking. 'The romantics', write Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen Higgins (in 'A Short History of Philosophy, 1996, p. 226), 'took [Schopenhauer's] emphasis on art and aesthetic appreciation as a mode of [personal] salvation (albeit temporary) quite seriously, and in his old age Schopenhauer became the philosophical darling of the romantic movement.' Cf. note 30 above. I also think of Camille Paglia's point about how incest (another form of subjectivity, and one invoked in several Hitchcock films from *The Lodger* onwards) provided subject-matter for Romantics like Goethe, Byron, Balzac. 'The Romantic prestige of incest springs from its reversal of history and its collapsing of psychic energies into the overenlarged self.' (C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence From Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson', 1991, p. 267)

63. See Mogg, pp. 146-49 (essay on *Vertigo*).

64. R.C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self' (1988).

65. Solomon, p. 1.

66. Such thinking seems to be implicit in the dynamics of several Hitchcock films. See 'Author's Note' in Mogg, p. 4.

67. Solomon, p. 193.

68. Ibid.

69. Midge has several shots to herself (e.g., in the sanatorium corridor) that depict her suffering, and Judy's flashback begins with the camera on *her* anguished face. Even so, in the case of such a 'Schopenhauerian' film as *Vertigo* (which is how I've often described it), it helps to remember that Schopenhauer felt that *all* of us are suffering creatures, the result of the working of the world's Will. (I would ask: is even Gavin Elster happy?)

70. L. Brill, 'The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films' (1988), p. 180.

71. I'm thinking of the Hitchcock who could make *Champagne*, with its insights into the unruly libido, of *The Skin Game*, with its understanding of rampant human egoism, of *Rich and Strange*, with its comments on solipsism ...

72. Actually it reads 'Life Savers - the candy with the hole', but the film purposefully excludes most of it. (In my book, p. 77, I make the mistake of saying that Ann and Jeff go on the Ferris wheel itself, rather than on the nearby parachute-ascension.)

73. Mogg, p. 77

74. For a reading of how the 'Storm Cloud Cantata' belongs in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, see Mogg, p. 143.

75. As I've indicated above, the term 'Will' is that of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).

76. Apropos *The Wrong Man*, see Mogg, p. 145; or, for more detail, see my article in 'MacGuffin' 20.

77. Both of Jeff's parents are easily shockable Southern types ...

78. See D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock: The Dark Side of Genius' (1983), pp. 238-39 - where, though, the author's remarks about Hitchcock's 'iconoclastic, schoolboy perversity' are perhaps uncalled for, given the *aptness* of the intended scene to the film's near-surreal design.

79. Solomon, pp. 93-94.

80. Quoted in Leff, p. 243.

81. Kant's distinction between a knowable phenomenal realm and an unknowable noumenal realm has sometimes been ignored, but never disproven. (His views were merely modified by Schopenhauer.) In such a context, a remark of Kierkegaard's about the necessity of 'going right through to the other side' (of subjective existence) seems telling.

82. Quoted in Auden, p. 13.

83. J. Mosher, "Ellie May and her set", 'New Yorker', 1st March, 1942, p. 53. Cited in J. Sloan, 'Alfred Hitchcock: a guide to references and resources' (1995), p. 360.

BLOOPERS

Apologies to Inge Izzo, and our readers, for the mis-spelling of 'liaison' in the last paragraph of Inge's article on *Mr and Mrs Smith* in 'MacGuffin' 26, p. 14. The error was the proof-reader's, not the author's.

Hitchcock's depiction of an aspect of France

By James M. Vest

Among the strengths of Dan Auiler's '*Vertigo*: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic' (1998) is the author's perceptive insistence (developing an idea advanced by Spoto, Taylor, and Yacowar) that much of what we think of as centrally Hitchcockian - settings, themes, imagery, pacing, narrative and visual emphases - was already present in germ in the director's 1919 story "Gas". This is a one-page tale about a young woman who is tracked and assaulted in the Montmartre district of Paris, 'where danger lurked ..., where innocent souls perished without warning - where doom confronted the unwary - where the Apache revelled' (Auiler, p. 6).

Auiler is correct in identifying the 'darkly romantic side of France' as a dominant element in "Gas", but he is incorrect in asserting that Hitchcock 'never exploited [that] side of France in his films' (p. 7). A few prominent counter-examples will show what I mean. In *Champagne* (1928) the attractive young heroine is stalked, then robbed of her valuables by a Parisian thug. The difficulties that ensue in the dance halls of Paris recall the Apaches of "Gas". Disreputable French dance halls and ruffians appear center stage in *Downhill* (1927) as well, where in the final third of the film the degradation of an innocent British youth is visually and viscerally depicted first in Montmartre, the very setting of "Gas", then on the docks at Marseilles. The South of France is portrayed as locus of risk and major psychological displacement not only in *Downhill* but also in *Easy Virtue* (1927), and even in *Rebecca* (1940), where 'Monte' serves synecdochically to represent a culture of deceit and danger associated with that locale.

This conception carries through into Hitchcock's later work. The same themes were central to his 1944 short film *Bon Voyage*, which again recounts the misadventures of an innocent Briton (actually a Scot like *Vertigo*'s Ferguson) who nearly loses his life in threatening France. Even though *To Catch a Thief* (1955) may resemble, in Auiler's terms, 'a postcard valentine to the area [of Southern France]' (p. 7), it still manages to dwell on themes of deceit, threat, and risk-taking similar to those of "Gas".

From my perspective as researcher of Hitchcock's French connections, it appears that Auiler is correct in asserting that much of the mystery associated with the French setting in the Boileau-Narcejac novel 'D'Entre les Morts' is satisfactorily transposed to the San Francisco depicted in *Vertigo* (p. 7). According to Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell, in an interview included in Harrison Engle's short film on the restoration of *Vertigo* (1958), her father considered San Francisco to be 'rather like an American Paris'.

Indeed Hitchcock frequently reconstituted the dangerous, nightmarish ambiance described in "Gas", both explicitly, in the films mentioned above, and implicitly, referentially, as in pointed allusions to unsettling aspects of France in the dialogue of *Suspicion* (1941) or *Frenzy* (1972) or the more oblique displacements of *Vertigo*.

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Indulgence: we catch up on our critics' 'best films' for 1998 and 1999 (with their lists for 2000 to follow next issue)

Three of Australia's wisest film reviewers are Tom Ryan, Evan Williams, and Adrian Martin.

Here they choose the cream of new and classic feature films to be shown or re-released in Australia during the year in question.

Some of these films are already turning up, or have turned up, on television or in revival cinemas. Shop wisely, we say. If in doubt, follow our reviewers' recommendations!

1998

Tom's selection (from films released to general audiences):

1. Fast, Cheap & Out of Control (Errol Morris, USA)
2. The Truman Show (Peter Weir, USA)
3. The Wings of the Dove (Ian Softley, UK)
4. The Year of the Horse (Jim Jarmusch, USA)
5. As Good As It Gets (James L. Brooks, USA)
6. Marquise (Vera Belmont, France)
7. The Swseet Hereafter (Atom Egoyan, Canada)

8. Welcome to Sarajevo (Michael Winterbottom, UK)
9. Live Flesh (Pedro Almodovar, Spain)
10. Primary Colors (Mike Nichols, USA); Starship Troopers (Paul Verhoeven)

Evan's selection:
1. The Truman Show
2. The Sweet Hereafter
3. Hana-bi (Takeshi Kitano, Japan)
4. La Vita è Bella/ Life is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni, Italy)
5. Post Coitum Animal Triste/ After Sex (Brigitte Roüan, France)
6. The Boys (Rowan Woods, Australia)
7. Primary Colors
8. Gadjo Dilo/ The Crazy Stranger (Tony Gatlif, France)
9. Welcome to Sarajevo
10. The Tango Lesson (Sally Potter, UK/France/Argentina)

Adrian's selection (films released to general or film festival audiences, 5 only, as published in the Melbourne 'Age'):
1. Kundun (Martin Scorsese, USA)
2. Hana-bi
3. The Apostle (Robert Duvall, USA)
4. Alien Resurrection/ Alien 4 (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, USA)
5. As Good As It Gets

1999

Tom's selection (films released to general audiences):
1. Eyes Wide Shut (Stanley Kubrick, USA)
2. Run, Lola, Run Tom Tykwer, Germany)
3. Besieged (Bernardo Bertolucci, Italy)
4. Shakespeare in Love (John Madden, UK)
5. Marius et Jeannette (Robert Guediguian, France)
6. The Sixth Sense (M. Night Shyamalan, USA)
7. 42 Up (Michael Apted, UK)
8. The Last Days (James Moll, USA)
9. The Winslow Boy (David Mamet, USA)
10. Toy Story 2 (John Lasseter, USA)

Tom's best re-release:
Touch of Evil (1958)

Evan's selection:
1. Eyes Wide Shut
2. The Thin Red Line (Terrence Malick, Canada/USA)
3. Being John Malkovich (Spike Jonze, USA)
4. My Name is Joe (Ken Loach, France, etc.)
5. The Sixth Sense
6. Love and Death on Long Island (Richard Kwietniowski, UK/Canada)
7. Praise (John S. Curran, Australia)
8. Pleasantville (Gary Ross, USA)
9. A Simple Plan (Sam Raimi, France, etc.)
10. Two Hands (Gregor Jordan, Australia)

Adrian's selection (all sources):
1. Haut Bas Fragile (Jacques Rivette, France, 1995)
2. Eyes Wide Shut
3. The Thin Red Line
4. Sombre (Philippe Grandrieux, France)
5. Touch of Evil
6. Buena Vista Social Club (Wim Wenders, Germany, etc.)
7. Rushmore (Wes Anderson, USA)
8. Black Cat White Cat (Emir Kusturica, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/France/Germany)
9. eXistenZ (David Cronenberg, Canada/France/UK)
10. Moonfleet (Fritz Lang, USA, 1955)

HITCHCOCK AND HOMOSEXUALITY: *TORN CURTAIN* (1966)[1]

By Theodore Price

Torn Curtain is Hitchcock's most disguised film on the theme of homosexuality. So far as I know, in all Hitchcock criticism it has never been so interpreted.

Here is the ostensible storyline of the film. A young American atomic physicist (Paul Newman) is in Copenhagen on his way to attend a convention of world atomic physicists. Instead, he flies to East Berlin, where he announces that he has defected to the Communists.

His professional specialty is defense against atomic attack, and he says that the Americans, being interested in offensive weapons, did not give him the resources to complete his experiments. In Communist East Germany, he says, he will be able to complete his work with leading Communist physicists and develop his defensive system (to make the world safe against atomic attack).

The young American has been accompanied to Denmark by his associate and fiancée (Julie Andrews), who is appalled to learn in East Berlin (where she has followed him against his will) of his defection.

Very much in love with him, though horrified at his becoming an American traitor, she at first plans to stay with him behind the Iron Curtain. But when at last she does threaten to abandon him, he reveals to her that he is really a double agent; he has come to East Germany to steal (for America) the secret formula for the defense system which his scientific counterpart in Communist East Germany has recently discovered.

By every critical consensus, the best (if not the only) real Hitchcock sequence in the film is the harrowing murder scene, where the young American and his German-woman contact asphyxiate an East German Communist counter-intelligence agent who is about to expose them. They kill him by shoving his head into the gas oven in a farmhouse kitchen, after trying in vain to stab and beat him to death. The killing scene takes about ten full minutes of screen time.

As a teenager, I recall reading in some lurid tabloid the real-life story of a couple who insured the life of a lodger of theirs, with themselves as beneficiaries, in just this manner and under just these circumstances: they try to kill him with all sorts of weapons, but in vain, and succeed only at last by gassing him to death. I am convinced that Hitch, with his interest in such things, had read accounts of this particular murder. At any rate, Hitchcock's film was a critical and popular disaster.[2]

Is *Torn Curtain* about politics, or is politics in *Torn Curtain* just another Hitchcock "MacGuffin"? (To ask the question is to answer it.) Hitchcock has had a long and continued tradition of real-life, contemporary politics in his films, from early pacifist (after World War I) to anti-isolationist (just before World War II), and later to anti-Communist orientations. But these were all pretty much cardboard interpretations, quite silly when you got right down to them; and they really *were* MacGuffins, "what the spies were after but the audience don't care."

If you would like to see just how silly even a normally perceptive film critic can be when he takes Hitch's political orientation in a film seriously, you should read Raymond Durgnat's full-length chapter discussion of the "politics" of *Torn Curtain,* and you will see that Durgnat's elaborate discussion there has no relation whatever to the substance of what we actually see on the screen.

The political substance of *Torn Curtain* is, I suggest, of no more intellectual stature than the theological substance of *I Confess*;[3] and Durgnat's taking that political substance seriously is just as silly as Rohmer and Chabrol's taking seriously the Roman Catholic substance of *I Confess*. If one concentrates on the political substance of *Torn Curtain,* and its elements of suspense in relation to this substance, one is, I feel, approaching the film quite barrenly; and, consequently, this very flawed film in the Hitchcock canon (flawed as almost everyone agrees) provides little interest. On the other hand, if one approaches the film from a Hitchcock and Homosexuality point of view, *Torn Curtain* becomes a very interesting film indeed.

From the Hitchcock and Homosexuality point of view, here is what the real storyline of the film is about, what the film is really about. As always, in the story outline that follows, I give nothing that is not in the film; I simply highlight those elements and signposts that give clues to what is really going on in the film. These are clues to those elements in the film that really interested Hitchcock in this respect.

First, and always most important, in *Torn Curtain* we have the story of a couple about to be married, already sleeping together; but soon things happen that will stop, or try to stop, that marriage![4] For over and over again in Hitchcock's films, marriages (or affairs or simply going together) are thwarted, made fun of, or shown to be on a collision course. One could say that virtually Hitch's entire canon of films is one big Marriage Cycle, where the prognostication for each of those marriages is disaster.

A good case in point is *The Wrong Man,* where at the start of the film Henry Fonda and Vera Miles have what is seemingly an ideal marriage: children, no thought of adultery, even good in-laws. But when the film is through, the marriage is in absolute shambles, never to be reconstituted, with the wife driven (by destiny and the law) into a madhouse. Such is Henry Fonda's punishment for thinking that he could find happiness with a woman![5]

Torn Curtain starts with just such a seemingly happy situation: the good-looking Paul Newman, naked and in bed with no less a faithful young lady than Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews). But, lo! he suddenly "changes," stops making love to her, deserts her (he had not wanted her to come with him to Europe in the first place), and runs off to a social life the complete opposite of what she had always expected him to engage in.

He is supposed to go on to Stockholm (on business), but at a stop in Copenhagen the young woman is dismayed to catch him in a series of lies. First, he lies to her about a bookshop in Copenhagen where he seems unusually interested in a special book (in plain wrapping) which, as soon as he lays hands on it, he takes to a stall in a men's room to read. Then, to her horror, she learns that he has made a secret plane reservation (for one) to Germany, and to that special part of Germany where the life-style is completely the antithesis of the life-style to which the two of them (about to be married to each other) have been accustomed. Indeed, one could say that this journey to Germany is a complete defection from, and betrayal of, that life-style.

At the time the film was made, Copenhagen, Denmark, had the reputation of being the pornography capital of the West, with complete sexual license permitted,[6] and many American homosexual men were looking forward to taking their vacations there. And in Hitchcock's mind, continental Europe, and Germany in particular, represented the land of netherworld sex (especially of homosexual sex) in the Weimar period of his youth.

In the movie, the young woman, against her erstwhile fiancé's wishes, flies with him behind this, so to speak, Iron Curtain, to the land of Weimar/German netherworld sex. Here she finds herself the lone woman among this unusual, other-oriented society of men, whose leading members make such references to her as "excess baggage," and exclaim in the greatest of scorn, "Women!"

We recall how in *Frenzy,* right after the rape-strangulation, Barry Foster exclaims, also in the greatest of scorn, "Women! They're all the same . . . bitches!" We should also recall how in *The Paradine Case* Louis Jourdan, the woman-hating homosexual who is seduced by Alida Valli into going to bed with her for that single night, employs the concept of "betrayal" of his "master," his homosexual lover, Colonel Paradine, to signify the betrayal of his (Jourdan's) true sexual orientation.

Throughout this early part of *Torn Curtain,* as the young woman is discovering the truth about her erstwhile fiancé, there is repeated dialogue about her not "knowing," and then, finally, "knowing." For example, Paul Newman says to his German compatriot, "She didn't know. She can't know. She just followed me."

A key scene in this storyline structure is the one at the Berlin hotel. The young man has announced his "defection," and his fiancée realizes to her chagrin and horror that he does not intend to go through with their coming marriage. Hitchcock has himself referred to this scene as "the dramatic showdown between the young couple" (Truffaut, *Hitchcock,* 233). In this scene the young man confirms that he has "changed": he tells the young woman that he does not need her. He does not want her. He asks her to go home.

As we can see, this is *just* the equivalent scene to the one on the riverboat in I *Confess,* where Montgomery Clift tells Anne Baxter that he has "changed," that he is what he is, that he can no longer continue their affair, that he has joined an order of men who just do not sleep with women, and that he prefers them to her.

We should understand that the Roman Catholic priesthood, which ends the affair between Clift and Baxter in I *Confess,* and the political defection to Communist East Germany, which ends the forthcoming marriage between Paul Newman and Julie Andrews in *Torn Curtain,* are equally, in every sense of that famous Hitchcock shorthand expression, MacGuffins. In each case, the affair and the marriage are ended because the young man is a homosexual, has discovered his homosexuality and accepted it, and has announced this fact to his mistress or to his fiancée. In each case, Roman

Catholicism and Communism, in their respective films, are "what the spies are after, but the audience don't [or shouldn't] care about."[7]

As a fixture in this showdown scene in *Torn Curtain* between Paul Newman and Julie Andrews in the East Berlin hotel, there is the large hotel room *bed,* which we see as the two young people discuss this matter. It is, it symbolizes, the marital bed. And that night. Julie sleeps in it alone. As we saw, the film began with Newman and Andrews making love together in the ship's stateroom. Now, this showdown scene tells us, visually as well as through the dialogue, that they are to make love no more.

But, as so often happens in real life, and which so often is implied to happen in Hitchcock's films, the young woman loves the young man so much that she will not give him up. Despite her humiliation, her "degradation" one might say,[8] she will (if he will have her) live with him, marry him, set up with him (as in *Rebecca)* a fraud of a marriage: They will live together as man and wife, they will make love when the man may be able to, but his true sexual pleasure will be reserved for those of his own kind.

What Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* is about then, in a nutshell, is this. It is the story of a young woman, about to be married, who learns that her fiancé is not what he seems to be and has gone behind some "iron curtain" where he will be able to be what he really is. And what he really is is a homosexual.

If *Torn Curtain* is really a Hitchcock film about homosexuality, we can expect to find in it an important character who represents that common theme in this sort of film: the blackmailer. And we can expect him to be a blackmailer of a special type: a cat-and-mouse blackmailer, one who sadistically teases his victim, who gets pleasure out of seeing his victim squirm, who makes little jokes and innuendoes to let his victim know that *he* knows all about him, knows his secret, and can expose him at any moment.

Sure enough, in *Torn Curtain* we are not disappointed. The cat-and-mouse blackmailer in the film, played so marvelously by Wolfgang Kieling, is the East German Communist counter-intelligence agent, Gromek.

Gromek: who used to live in New York City, who keeps using the expression "Strictly for the birds," and to whom Hitchcock (unconsciously) assigns a cigarette lighter to play around with, just as he had assigned a cigarette lighter to Robert Walker to play around with in *Strangers on a Train*: Robert Walker, the homosexual blackmailer of *that* film. Walker: who keeps toying with *his* victim, the sometime homosexual Farley Granger, who now wants to marry his fiancée and go "straight."

Gromek does not believe that Paul Newman is really a homosexual. He thinks that he is only pretending to be one (and, of course, in the final storyline this is supposed to be the case).

In *Notorious*, there is that wonderful scene in the bedroom of Claude Rains' mother, when Rains confesses to her that he is "married to an American agent." And in our Hitchcock Fils interpretation of that film, this translates into "I am married to a prostitute."[9] So in *Torn Curtain,* when Gromek discovers that Paul Newman is in fact an American agent (as Gromek has suspected right from the start), this translates into discovering that Newman is that most awful of outrages: a heterosexual!

Wolfgang Kieling, who plays Gromek in the film, is absolutely marvelous in the part. The sequence where Kieling is done to death by Newman and Newman's anti-Communist contact in the film, the German farm woman, when Kieling surprises the two of them in that out-of-the-way farmhouse, is the highlight of the film: a real Hitchcock sequence, right after the Old Master's murderous heart.

As Newman holds Kieling, the woman stabs him with a carving knife from the kitchen drawer. But when the handle breaks off, leaving the blade still protruding from his body but not killing him, she breaks Kieling's kneecap and shin with blows from a heavy shovel. Finally, the two force Kieling's head into the gas oven of the kitchen, and hold it there until he is slowly asphyxiated.

The scene takes a full ten minutes on the screen, and its emotional and artistic energy is terrific. This sequence, as is usually the case with such sequences in Hitchcock films, is over-determined; that is to say, it has more than one meaning.

We have here an absolutely unequivocal Oedipal situation, from a Hitchcock Fils point of view: it is every son's wish fulfillment that the father would catch the mother and son in the act of love, and that the mother would help the son - indeed, take the active role - in killing the father.

The woman here (she is youngish and attractive, looking a little like Liv Ullmann) is the one who does the stabbing, the hitting with the shovel; and it is she who suggests the oven, opens the oven door, turns on the jets, helps Newman to shove Kieling's head in, and then turns off the jets when the job is done.

After the killing, Newman cries like a little boy, like a baby. The woman, on the other hand, is all businesslike (and mother-like): she washes the blood from Newman's jacket and hands, and helps him bury the dead man (and his motorcycle) in a deep pit outside the house.

The getting rid of the body (and the vehicle on which the murder victim had arrived at the farmhouse) reminds us of the way Tony Perkins in *Psycho* gets rid of Janet Leigh's body by putting it into the trunk of her car and sinking the whole lot into a pit. In *Psycho,* of course, the murder is, so to speak, a Mother-and-Son job. So, 1 suggest, it is here in *Torn Curtain.*

The sequence is so important that it stands out, really jumps out, from the rest of the film. From the Oedipal point of view, it is virtually undisguised: it seems so obvious. Freud and Theodor Reik have told us that while for the most part the unconscious deceives the "censorship" in a dream by disguising the forbidden meaning - and the more forbidden the meaning, the more disguised must be the representation - yet at times the unconscious simply overwhelms the censorship. That such a sequence is close to everything that Hitch's unconscious holds dear can be seen by the fact that the setting for this Oedipal vignette is identical to that of the sequence bearing just the same Oedipal content 30 years before in *The 39 Steps*: a farmhouse.

But for our purposes here, from the point of view of Hitchcock and Homosexuality, this same sequence - the killing of Gromek/Kieling - permits an additional interpretation. For just as in *Psycho* the murder of Janet Leigh in the shower stall is a representation of the rape of a *woman, so* here in *Torn Curtain* is the murder of Gromek/Kieling a representation of the rape of a *man*: a *homosexual* rape.

We should have been prepared for this by the beginning of *Rope,* where the symbolic meaning is clear and easy of interpretation. There, when the two young men (John Dall and Farley Granger) are strangling to death the third young man of that film (a former boyfriend of theirs, who has decided to get married, and this is their way of "stopping that marriage"), this really represents a homosexual rape of the boy. And, as in the shower scene in *Psycho*, the victim's scream stands for the moment of sexual climax.

In *Torn Curtain,* the details of the scene (which are executed in real Hitchcock fashion) are beyond Hitch's conscious control: they relate to, and dovetail with, familiar symbolic details of many of his other films. At the moment of Gromek/Kieling's asphyxiation (when Paul Newman is weeping as he holds the man's "head"), there is the emphasis on fingers that we see not only in *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest,* but in our ideal Touchstone Film, *Strangers on a Train.*

Here too Gromek/Kieling's fingers stiffen, shudder, then go limp. The killing, the rape, is complete.

And, of course, what is it that Gromek/Kieling does as he dies (asphyxiated by the gas)? He *faints*![10]

The sequence, moreover, dovetails with other longstanding interests of Hitchcock's. There is the fairy tale aspect (which Hitch always likes) of Hansel and Gretel in the woods, turning the tables on *their* would-be killer and thrusting the wicked stepmother herself into an oven.

From a further Hitchcock and Homosexuality aspect, especially of the *Vertigo* variety, the man and the woman in the farmhouse may represent Paul Newman and Julie Andrews, where she, like so many of Hitch's women who find that they are in love with a homosexual, wants to try to bring him around to good heterosexual sex and make him forget that other life of his; and Gromek/Kieling may represent the young fiancé's phallus, which the two of them are trying to thrust into the woman's "oven," but in vain, for at the last minute, the phallus "faints."

This may be a far-fetched and unconvincing psychoanalytic interpretation, and I do not stress it. But that an oven is a standard symbol for a woman's sexual organ or womb can be seen in the common Cockney English slang expression (which Hitch must surely have been familiar with) of referring to a pregnant woman as having "a bun in the oven."

The third important scene in *Torn Curtain* is the one in the German Communist professor's university study with the blackboard, where Newman tricks the older man into revealing to him that anti-missile missile MacGuffin formula, which in the storyline Newman goes behind the Iron Curtain to obtain. The scene is important and instructive if only to demonstrate just how, for whatever reason, actors like Paul Newman were just not right for a Hitchcock movie. With the same props (the blackboard and writing the silly set of formulae upon it) and nothing much more than their acting ability,

Ludwig Donath is marvelous here, and Newman is something less than marvelous. One can sympathize with Hitchcock for regretting that he had been saddled with Newman (by Universal) for this film.

Robert Donat in *The 39 Steps*; Judith Anderson, George Sanders, and Florence Bates in *Rebecca; C*ary Grant in *Suspicion*; Joseph Cotten in *Shadow of a Doubt*; Tallulah Bankhead in *Lifeboat;* Claude Rains and Leopoldine Konstantin in *Notorious*; Charles Coburn in *The Paradine Case;* Alastair Sim in *Stage Fright;* Robert Walker, Laura Elliott, and Pat Hitchcock in *Strangers on a Train;* Karl Malden in *I Confess;* Ray Milland in *Dial M for Murder;* Jimmy Stewart in *Rear Window* and *Vertigo;* Martin Balsam and Tony Perkins in *Psycho*; Tippi Hedren in *Marnie;* Philippe Noiret in *Topaz;* Barry Foster, Barbara Leigh-Hunt, Anna Massey, Alec McCowen, Vivien Merchant, Bernard Cribbins, Elsie Randolph, Michael Bates, Jean Marsh, and Billie Whitelaw in *Frenzy;* Bruce Dern in *Family Plot;* and Wolfgang Kieling and Ludwig Donath in *Torn Curtain* - all these are square Hitchcock pegs to fit all those square Hitchcock holes.

But Paul Newman (the square peg for the square hole in a film like *The Hustler)* was certainly the roundest of round pegs for the square Hitchcock hole needed to make *Torn Curtain* really interesting.

As preparation for this blackboard scene, we have been told in the film (twice) by Newman that "the information I'm after is inside the head of a scientist at Leipzig University," and "he's got the key to a puzzle in his head." And in typical Fils fashion, the son *tricks* the father out of the secret information he (the son) is looking for.

As we have earlier learned, repeatedly, the "secrets" in general that younger men keep looking for are the secrets of sex, and, in particular, the secrets of the father's sexual achievement with the mother.

The scenes with the professor, and especially the scene with the professor and Newman at the blackboard ("You have told me nothing. You know nothing. I forbid you to leave this room!") are thus typical Hitchcock Fils scenes, representing the son's tricking the father in one way or another in order to extract sexual secrets from him. And the famous farmhouse killing scene is both a typical Hitchcock Fils Oedipal-scene, a wish fulfillment of the son, that the mother will help him do away with the father, and a typical Hitchcock Homosexual Rape scene, where the murder act is symbolically equivalent to the act of sexual rape.

But the scene in that East Berlin hotel room is not symbolic at all. Rather it is an integral part of the subtext of the Hitchcock and Homosexuality storyline, which Hitch himself labels the "showdown" scene of the film and of which, as a sophisticated graduate of the Weimar German netherworld scene of the mid-'20s, he must surely have been aware on the conscious level. For in this scene, or in close-by earlier scenes leading up to this "showdown" scene, there is the following pointed dialogue:

The young woman says to her fiancé, "You did everything you could to stop me from coming" (that is, from making the trip abroad with him at all). And she asks him, "Aren't I of use to you anymore?"

She has suggested that they might "get an apartment" and live together; and, of course. he has refused. She has started to check up on him, and now catches him repeatedly in lies.

Now, at last, we hear him say right out to her, "*Well, now you know."*

And she to him: "You must have been planning this for months. How could you tell those lies?"

And he: "I thought it would be better if you didn't know about this."

She: "I didn't know what to do. I had to follow you."

He: "You know how important this is to me. I have to go through with it."

She: "But you're a traitor." (Which translates to, "But you're a homosexual, and homosexuality is a sexual perversion.")

He: "That's not the way I see it ... I can't explain it to you."

And all the time the "marital" bed is there in the scene, between them; and that night they are not to sleep in it together.

Finally, what is the name that Hitch gives to the Paul Newman character? Why, it is *Michael,* the same name borne by the Montgomery Clift character in *I Confess,* and the very name of the nude model in a famous Weimar Era homosexual film of that name, *Mikael*![11]

All of the above is evidence from a strictly internal point of view, using material from the storyline of *Torn Curtain* itself, and going to other Hitchcock films for themes and clues only to elicit signposts to guide us to the right and proper elements in the present film. Is there, however, any external evidence in connection with *Torn Curtain* to suggest that Hitchcock may have (quite consciously) been interested in this film from the Hitchcock and Homosexuality point of view?

That is to say, is there any external evidence that Hitchcock, quite consciously and deliberately, may have wanted to tell the story of a homosexual, married to or about to be married to a woman who did not suspect that he might be a homosexual, who has been playing the part of a sexual double agent with her, and who now decides to desert her and be true to his real nature? And, if so, what does the woman do when she at last "finds out"? And the answer is: of course!

The storyline of Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* is based on the famous defection to Russia in 1951 of the long-standing British double agents, Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, both homosexuals!

Burgess was a notorious, out-of-the-closet homosexual, and Maclean was suspected of being bisexual. Maclean was married; when he defected, his wife was pregnant and was supposed not to have known of either his spy work or his homosexual life.

In the past 25 years, since the Burgess and Maclean defection to Moscow in 1951, many books have added to the complexity of both the political and sexual lives of the members of this famous spy ring. (The ring included not only Burgess and Maclean, but a third man, and a fourth: Sir Anthony Blunt, and perhaps others.) Their story is quite remarkable, of great cultural and political interest in itself, one of the keys to how the Communists are able to attract the best and the brightest from our side to theirs, and why they have won, and are continuing to win, so many victories on the diplomatic, political, and military fronts.

But the point here is that at the time Hitchcock made *Torn Curtain*, he knew nothing of all this, only that two Britons had led a secret, double life for two decades (seemingly members of one order, the West, but in fact members, double agents, of another order, the Communist East), and that one of these double agents was a secret homosexual, married all the while, and his wife did not know. What would she do when she *found out*? Predictably, Hitch found this very interesting! In particular, he wondered just how the wife would react to the revelation that the man she had been living with, been married to all these years, was other than he seemed to be.

Donald Spoto tells us (significantly) that this idea of *Torn Curtain* was an old one "that had long intrigued" Hitchcock. And Hitch himself told Truffaut in 1967, "I got the idea from the disappearance of the two British diplomats, Burgess and Maclean, who deserted their country and went to Russia. I said to myself, 'What did Mrs. Maclean think of the whole thing?'" (Truffaut, 233).

Spoto tells us that Universal arranged for Hitchcock to have Paul Newman and Julie Andrews as stars of the picture but that they (Universal) insisted that the "homosexuality sub-theme" had to be "dropped" *(The Dark Side*, 488). Spoto gives no indication that the Hitchcock and Homosexuality theme might not in fact have been "dropped."

In discussing the film with Truffaut, Hitchcock has expressed considerable hostility towards Paul Newman and Julie Andrews, professionally and at times personally. I suggest that a more compelling reason for Hitchcock's animus against Newman and Andrews may derive from his associating with them the decision (by Universal) to drop the homosexuality theme. As evidenced throughout his films, that theme had great fascination for him; and he perhaps felt that it was this decision that ruined *Torn Curtain* for him.

I further suggest that it was Hitch's lack of real identification with the Newman character (an identification that would have given the film so much energy) that went against the grain of the "real" storyline. Instead, Hitch identifies almost surely with the German professor, Lindt, who gets all the good lines in the scenes in which he appears, and whom Ludwig Donath so brilliantly portrays.

In the key blackboard scene, Hitch has Lindt point to his head and say (just as Hitch points to his workbooks about his films rather than to the films [themselves], which, he claims, he does not really enjoy making): "Here's where the work is done. The rest is for mechanics." When Newman suggests that Lindt has misunderstood something, Lindt answers, "I, Lindt? Misunderstood? Rubbish!"

And when Newman, at the blackboard, open-mouthed, sees that Lindt has solved the problem that had licked Newman, and he calls Lindt "Brilliant," Hitchcock has Lindt answer, "Of course, it's brilliant. It's genius. The Russians thought I was crazy. They didn't know I was Lindt."

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Editor's Notes

1. What follows is Chapter 11 of Theodore Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality: His 50-Year Obsession with Jack the Ripper and the Superbitch Prostitute - A Psychoanalytic View' (The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, N.J., & London, 1992), reprinted with the author's permission. The Editor of 'The MacGuffin' wishes to express his gratitude to Dr Price for his kindness in offering us the chapter for publication.

2. Just how much of an alleged disaster was the film? See note 47 of the article "Submission, containment, liberation" elsewhere in this issue. Also, see Ken Mogg, 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (London, 1999), p. 173, which quotes veteran British reviewer Richard Mallett: 'The film as a whole may be a bit diffuse ... but it has some brilliant scenes, it's pleasing to the eye, and it is *continuously* entertaining.'

3. Price's book notes on p. 251: 'From this "religious" aspect, the only element of [*I Confess*] that counts is that a priest, officially hearing a confession, must not reveal that confession, no matter what the consequences, even if they should cost him his life. The reviewer in the *Catholic World* notes quite accurately that in the movie [Montgomery] Clift "has very little recourse to God" ...' And Price also quotes Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' on how, 'The film is not, in the last analysis, a religious film at all. The law of confessional secrecy is but an unusual dramatic device'. Price's chapter on *I Confess* is often brilliant (though not necessarily the final word on the film's true subject-matter).

4. Price is referring here to the Stop That Marriage! motif that he discerns in just about all of Hitchcock's movies. In one of Price's 'touchstone' films, *Strangers on a Train* (1951), he sees it thus: 'The passive homosexual tries to go straight and marry a woman (though he is panicky). The active homosexual tries to stop the marriage, and bring his sweetheart [sic] back to his homosexual senses.' (p. 22) Of *The Farmer's Wife* (1928), Price writes: 'This is an anti-marriage "comedy," where every eligible woman the farmer meets is shown to us as gross, monstrous, and ridiculous. The farmer decides at last not to marry any of them, but to stay as he is and to "marry" his mother-surrogate "housekeeper."' (p. 48) And so on. (Price doesn't always mention the contrary or countervailing ingredients in the films: e.g. the farmer in *The Farmer's Wife* had previously been happily married and has a grown-up daughter who herself gets married in the course of the film. But this perhaps hardly invalidates Price's basic insight.)

5. This is one of Price's weaker illustrations, it seems to me, for the very fragility of marriage, like the fragility of justice, and indeed of human civilisation, exposed by *The Wrong Man*, in a way only makes those institutions the more precious.

6. The year after *Torn Curtain* came out, the book 'Christine Jorgenson: A Personal Autobiography' was published. It included details of Jorgenson's highly-publicised sex-change operation which took place in Copenhagen in 1952-53. There's a veiled reference to the Jorgenson case in William Castle's estimable *Psycho* spin-off, *Homicidal* (1961), apropos how the character named Emily had been 'created' on a visit to Denmark years earlier. Denmark, it seems, was one of the few countries in those days that would allow such an operation to be performed. (My thanks to Denise Noe for the information about *Homicidal*.)

7. On the 'Homosexual Aspect' of *I Confess*, see Price, pp. 270-87. Noting that Father Logan (played by the gay Montgomery Clift) is being blackmailed, and that his 'double', the sacristan murderer, Keller (O.E. Hasse), is himself played by a gay actor, Price concludes: 'And so we have [a situation] where the leading man turns down the beautiful, ice-cool blonde heroine (with whom he has once been sleeping) with the remark that he has "changed," and that he "is what he is"; where blackmail is involved; where there is a Wrong Man and a Right Man, and the Right Man tells the Wrong Man that the latter is as "guilty" as himself; where the film ends in virtual Love/Death fashion, with the one Double dying in the other Double's arms (like the gay Doubles, Farley Granger and Robert Walker, in *Strangers on a Train*); and where, yes, both Doubles, hero and villain, are played by real-life homosexuals!' (p. 287) Cf Sidney Gottlieb (ed.), *Hitchcock on Hitchcock* (1995), p. 264, on how Hitchcock had written in 1938: 'I like an actor to play a part for which his personal experience in life has raised him.'

8. Price is quoting from Hitchcock's phrase 'degradation for love' here. Cf the entry on *The Paradine Case* (1948) in Truffaut's interview with Hitchcock: viz., 'the story of *The Paradine Case* is about the degradation of a gentleman who becomes enamoured of his client, a woman who is not only a murderess, but also a nymphomaniac. And that degradation reaches its climactic point when he's forced to confront the heroine with one of her lovers, who is a groom [and a homosexual].'

9. Price explains that in his psychoanalytic readings of the films, he uses the shorthand term *Hitchcock Fils* to designate an Oedipal interpretation from the perspective of the *son*, and the shorthand term *Hitchcock Père* to designate an Oedipal interpretation from the perspective of the *father*. (p. xvi) In another of Price's particularly brilliant chapters, on *Rebecca*

(1940), in which he finds the Joan Fontaine character to be cast, against appearances, in the role of a prostitute, he comments on the scene in *Notorious*: what the Claude Rains character 'has been forced to admit is the fact (or feeling) that the woman he has fallen in love with and gone to bed with is a whore!' (And whores are precisely what the misogynist Jack-the-Ripper surrogates in Hitchcock films are against, to the point of actual or symbolic murder.) Price sees a major recurrent theme in Hitchcock to be 'I have fallen in love with a prostitute.' (p. 163)

10. For Price, the significance of *males* fainting in later Hitchcock films (as opposed to the frequent fainting by *females* in the British films, though Price doesn't exactly note this distinction, I think) may be seen in his description of a moment in *Strangers on a Train*: 'think too of the scene at Leo G. Carroll's cocktail party, right after Robert Walker has almost strangled the old lady and has then, like some distraught young woman, fainted. He has been carried to another room, where the two young men are now alone and where the passive Farley, like a solicitous wife, revives him.' (pp. 24-25) (See also the main text of the present article.) The notion of Gromek's death by asphyxiation as being a form of fainting may not be the best, or most convincing, illustration of Price's insight, however.

11. The reference is to Carl Dreyer's *Mikael* (1924). Price notes that there were two German homosexual films at about this time, the earlier being *Different From the Others*/ *Anders Als Die Anderen* (1919), starring Conrad Veidt (who played the somnambulist Cesare in *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* the same year). Of *Mikael*, Price writes that in it, 'the beautiful young artist model is named Mikael. This may seem to be no great argument, but to those of the orthodox psychoanalytic persuasion, this provides additional weight for suggesting that *I Confess* is indeed a disguised story on a homosexual theme. If Hitch did indeed see *Mikael* in 1924-1925 (as he more likely than not did), and was more or less affected by the visual image of the handsome, young nude male artist's model, then how appropriate to name his Clift hero of *I Confess*, Michael. (Freud says that names are always important.)' (p. 351) Price goes on to note that the blackmailer in *Different From the Others* was played by Reinhold Schünzel, who had a not unimportant role in *Notorious*, and that the artist's model in *Mikael* was played by Walter Slezak, who would portray the Nazi in *Lifeboat* (1944).

Further reading

Two recent articles on *Torn Curtain* are (1) Christopher D. Morris, "*Torn Curtain*'s Futile Talk", in 'Cinema Journal' 39.1 (1999), pp. 54-73; and (2) James M. Vest, "The Consumer Controlled: Hitchcock's Cameo in *Torn Curtain*", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1998-99, pp. 3-19.

Excerpt from Chapter 12 of *Torn Curtain* (Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1966)

Novelisation by Richard Wormser (based on a screenplay by Brian Moore)[1]

The car was slowing down. Ahead of them one of the modern glass-aluminum-stainless steel-tile factories rose out of the plains. Manfred was saying that the manager of the factory was an old friend of his. "I think you will find a workers' factory interesting. Very different from the old days, certainly."

But except for one or two things, it was very much like any defense plant in Texas or California; one of the things that was different was the wintry landscape outside. The United States put its plants where the climate was good, and let the wandering labor force come to them. East Germany really had no place where the climate was good.

The other outstanding difference was the tables in the workers' canteen. In America they would have been small ones, for four or six or at most eight; and in all probability the workers would have served themselves, cafeteria style.

But here people ate at long refectory tables, and sat on long benches.

The manager's table was shorter than the others and set at right angles to them; the short table had chairs instead of benches. The manager was not very pretty, an ascetically thin man with tiny spectacle lenses held on a narrow nose by gold frames.

He was coldly effusive at meeting the defecting Americans about whom the radio had been spouting. Every time his bony frame jerked out a sentence, some sort of medal pinned to the right lapel of his business suit jerked and flapped.

Sarah, now that she suspected that Michael was not really a defector, was a little too bouncy, She tried to put the manager in his place by saying: "Shouldn't you eat at the long table with your workers? This arrangement doesn't seem very democratic."

"In the Democratic Republic," the thin man said coldly, "we waste no time. While the people are at their meal, we usually have a speaker. With chairs, one person can stand at a time and talk; with the table set so, all can hear him."

Manfred was looking at Sarah oddly. Michael distracted him by whispering, "I didn't get our friend's name when you introduced us, Karl,"

"Rudolph Gunter. We are very old comrades,"

"He must be clever to head such a large factory."

'Very clever."

Then they were seated. Down at one of the long tables Michael saw their chauffeur, yakking rather intimately with two men and a woman. The men had the same G-man air about them; Michael studied the woman, almost certain he had finally isolated a G-woman.

Yep, she looked like an airline hostess, or at least an ex-hostess; she was close to forty.

The meal was very good: lentil soup, and then boiled spareribs with sauerkraut and dumplings. Dessert was tapioca pudding, but it was well flavored and served with little cookies that tasted of anise. Michael looked at the workers' tables from time to time; their fare seemed identical.

The coffee was hot and strong.

Karl Manfred said, "Now Gunter introduces you, Michael."

The manager stood up, pushed his chair away, and began a long, dull talk in German. Michael could read that language better than he could understand it; and anyway it was the sort of speech that didn't say anything.

He turned to Sarah and said shortly, "So you've settled for the sauerkraut-and-dumpling life?"

"I hope they're low-calorie dumplings."

"Next you'll turn into a beer drinker."

"The price for being in love with a defector."

He dropped his voice even lower, saying, "Very, very careful, baby. And you don't know a thing."

"I'm a hell of a good guesser."

The manager was coming to the end of his droning discourse, apparently. Yes. He was telling them how unhappy Michael bad been, working for the war-mongers. Michael said, 'Sarah, guessing is very unscientific."

She laughed, and Karl Manfred turned his head, frowning. Sarah folded her hands in her lap like a scolded kid in school.

Michael put on his best listening expression, but his eyes wandered out over the workers, listening at their long tables, hunched forward on their uncomfortable benches. When he had to talk, he'd make it short.

He started marshalling a little German in his head. The Germans weren't as bad as the French about foreigners speaking their language perfectly; the effort counted more than the smoothness.

Then his mind went dead, his stomach stopped digesting, his breathing almost stopped, too.

Mr. Gromek was leaning back from one of the tables so as to get an unblocked view of Michael; he was grinning broadly, right into Michael's face.

It couldn't be. Gromek was gone, done for, disposed of. Probably the Southern farmer had used his tractor to bury him; Michael could imagine the phony German peasant grinning at the idea that the agent would make good fertilizer.

Gromek was gone, but there be was.

No. Blood started circulating again; that wasn't Gromek. This man was balder, and be seemed older.

A brother, certainly; but what was be grinning about? His brother was dead, which was no laughing matter.

But, of course, this factory-Gromek couldn't know that the Security-Gromek was dead. With luck - an awful lot of it - and brains - at least a modicum of those - Michael would be out of East Germany before anyone knew that Mr. Gromek was dead.

Michael came to with a start. Apparently Karl Manfred had been trying to get his attention to respond to the factory manager's speech; the manager was back in his chair.

And apparently they had given up trying to get Michael's attention, because Sarah was standing and talking.

She did all right. She said that on the part of Professor Armstrong and herself they were very glad to be in the Democratic Republic, and that they hoped to do the sort of work here that would make the world a safer and better place for workers everywhere. She sat down to heavy applause; under cover of it Michael heard her mutter, "Father, forgive me," and knew she was not blaspheming; it was not the heavenly father that she meant.

Now the workers were getting up, lighting cigarettes and pipes, strolling around. The manager was explaining to Karl Manfred that this was the hour for committee meetings. "We have a dramatic club, a political-science study group, creative-writing and art groups, everything."

Except union committees, Some sort of Labor Front would be appointed by the government, and would decide when the workers had a grievance and when they didn't.

Then a strong hand was gripping Michael's forearm, heels were clicking in the Central European manner, a bald head was dipping in a bow. "Gromek!"

Michael was startled for a moment, then pulled his wits together. This was how a stranger greeted you in this part of the world.

He bowed, clicked his own heels inexpertly, and said, "Armstrong."

"*Jawohl*," the brother said. 'We have seen Emil's picture with yours in the news. It is a great honor for him and for all our family. He is not here today?"

Careful, careful. "He is taking the luggage to Leipzig. Or so I was told by Mr. Gerhard."

Very good. The name of the head of Security did it. This Gromek stepped back a little, his face lost some of its geniality; be had been about to question an order of the dread Gerhard's, and had only been saved by Michael's quick talking.

Michael helped him further. "You work here, Mr. Gromek?"

"Yes, I am foreman of the fitting shop for five years now."

"Very good. I'll tell your brother when I see him at Leipzig." And that will be a long, hot day in Germany in winter.

"Oh, he knows what I do. We are a very tight family. Here, look, is a picture of me at the seashore last summer, with all of Emil's children. He was on duty, so I took the little ones on their holiday."

Michael stared through a red haze. Mr. Gromek was a family man; Mr. Gromek was loved; Mr. Gromek had - had had - four kids, three girls and a boy.

He stared at the picture, and then lie was aware that Karl Manfred was staring at him. He swallowed and handed the snapshot back.

Gromek gave his little bow again. "Would it be asking too much, Professor, for you to take a present to Emil?"

"Of course not, of course not."

"How happy he will be tonight in Leipzig. This is a special treat, since he was a little boy, garlic sausage has been a passion with him. Here, at our workers' canteen, it is particularly tasty."

The worker-Gromek bowed and was gone. Michael watched him push his way through a crowd of his fellow workers buying things at a counter at one side of the mess hall.

Apparently the workers bought the material for their evening meals at the factory; apparently the factory was the center of all their activities. But worker-Gromek must have told them that he was on an errand of international importance, because they parted to let him through.

He was back in a couple of minutes, brandishing a chunk of sausage that looked like salami to Michael, but undoubtedly wasn't. In his other hand Gromek waved a piece of butcher's paper. "I have told the canteen clerk that I will wrap it myself, so you can taste what a joy this sausage will be to my dear brother."

Holding sausage and paper in one hand, worker-Gromek reached in his pocket and pulled out a clasp knife.

Like the peasant woman's, it opened at a flick; like hers its handle was inlaid in silver.

This time the shock hit Michael's lungs rather than his stomach. He felt his breathing stop, his face grow pale.

But Manfred was still watching him. And now their chauffeur had left his Security pals and rejoined the group he was traveling with; he was watching, too.

Michael managed to chew the slice of sausage, dry; managed to swallow it; managed to say, "Delicious. Gromek will be overjoyed."

Worker-Gromek beamed, and the group moved away and out toward the car.

The manager went with them, and shook hands all around, and they were on their way, Michael carrying the wrapped garlic sausage.

The taste of the slice he had eaten was still with him when they stopped in front of the ancient main building of the University of Leipzig.

Editor's Note

1. This excerpt from the novelisation gives a good idea of what Hitchcock intended in the sequence of the film set in an East German workers' factory. The sequence was shot but never reached the final print. (Later, Hitchcock and Truffaut arranged for the cut footage to be donated to the Cinémathèque Française.) The trance-state into which Armstrong falls on seeing the dead Gromek's twin-brother may remind you that in 1959 Hitchcock shot an episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' called "Banquo's Chair" ...

Coming attractions

Our book reviews issue will include reviews of all or most of the following:

First, books received:
Richard Allen & Sam Ishii-Gonzalès (eds): 'Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays' (BFI)
Charles Barr: 'English Hitchcock' (Cameron & Hollis)
John Belton (ed.): 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*' (Cambridge)
Bill Krohn: 'Hitchcock at Work' (Phaidon)
Susan Smith: 'Hitchcock: Suspense, Humour and Tone' (BFI)

Other books:
Peter Conrad: 'The Hitchcock Murders' (Faber)
Jonathan Freedman & Richard Millington (eds): 'Hitchcock's America' (Oxford)
Paul Jensen: 'Hitchcock Becomes "Hitchcock"' (Midnight Marquee)

Other items received:
'Hitchcock Annual', 2000-01
Video: 'Alfred Hitchcock' (Creative Arts Television, Connecticut)

Submission, containment, liberation: Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* (1966)

> Michael tried to determine what his own attitude would be if this were America; would he be more willing to risk his life for fellow Americans than for foreigners?
> Probably, he thought. Undoubtedly Russians thought more of Russians than they did of East Germans or Poles; it was hopelessly built into the human frame, and too damned bad, but what were you going to do?
>
> - Richard Wormser. 'Torn Curtain' (based on a screenplay by Brian Moore): the bus sequence[1]

> For the world is Hell, and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it.
>
> - Arthur Schopenhauer, "On the Suffering of the World"[2]

> In *Buddhism* the world arises as a consequence of an inexplicable clouding of the heavenly clarity of ... Nirvana after a long period of quietude. Its origin is thus ... fundamentally to be understood in a moral sense, notwithstanding the case has an exact analogy in the ... origin of the sun in an inexplicable primeval streak of mist.
>
> - Ibid

Torn Curtain begins as follows. The screen swirls with grey mist. Electronic rumblings are heard. Out of the mist emerges a spurt of flame. The flame continues to burn, sun-like, on the left while, on the right, a succession of faces is seen as if through the mist.[3] The main-titles music starts up - a lurching yet urgent theme of horns and xylophones. The flame and the faces fade. The grey mist still swirls. The view dissolves - and the music segues - to the start of the film proper. We see a grey ship proceeding through a grey and misty Norwegian fjord ...

Two hours later the film ends on a downbeat note with another grey image, an image of the two principals (Paul Newman, Julie Andrews) huddled for warmth beneath a blanket. Given that none of the faces during the credits sequence shows much sign of happiness, and that several show actual suffering, you would expect the film proper to be downbeat, too. And that's how it is. With perhaps one notable exception, all the film's characters seem joyless. Accordingly, an interpretation of the credits sequence might have it that it starts by showing the birth of a universe, then proceeds to represent what both Buddhism and Hinduism (and some early Greek faiths) call the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Note the idea of recurrence implicit in the image of the wheel - and a possible counterpart in the film's recurring use of grey.

The exceptional character I mentioned who appears happier than everyone else is Professor Gustav Lindt (Ludwig Donath), a self-described 'genius'. Specifically, he's an aging nuclear physicist who clearly enjoys - in two senses - a unique status on the staff at the University of Leipzig in East Germany. A key scene has him instructing his young opposite number from the US, the apparent defector Professor Michael Armstrong (Newman), in some recondite aspects of missile propulsion. 'Learn!' he insists, with a patriarch's authority. (Little does he know that Armstrong has actually come to steal one of his secrets.)[4] But then, Hitchcock's geniuses are invariably exceptional. In *The Trouble With Harry* (1956), the artist who is called a 'genius' lives happily in backwater New England and couldn't care less about what city-people think of his work. He goes ahead regardless and paints his colourful canvases, one of which depicts, as he says, 'the beginning of the world'.[5]

* * *

More elaborate interpretations of the credits sequence may grow out of the one I've given. Allowing that the faces on screen-right represent 'sorrowful' human life, what story do they tell? Here's what we actually see: a couple making love; a watching eye; a succession of male and female faces, either contorted or impassively observing; finally, the distressed face of Sarah Sherman (Andrews) plummeting away from us. Broadly, the answer to my question about what story these faces tell could be given in philosophical terms as one of Will (life-force, or life-striving) and Representation (appearance) - here note two inseparable concepts of Arthur Schopenhauer, which I think effectively provide the key to the film. The left of screen depicts singular Will, symbolised by the sun; the right of screen depicts life's variegated Representation, the human condition.[6] Fittingly, composer John Addison's main-titles theme begins only when the faces start appearing. The full significance of this becomes more overt later when the same galumphing music recurs during the bus sequence, a sequence which again emphasises human diversity.

In less broad terms, those faces invite a further Schopenhauerian reading. For what we see (after the initial love-making, which somehow seems to cause what follows) are 'tormented souls' (the increasingly desperate, contorted faces) and 'devils' (the impassive watchers). Implicit in this concept is how members of both groups will soon enough find themselves swapping places. In short, what we see is a depiction of Hell (or Purgatory) on Earth.

That leaves the image of a darting eye. The image is at once ambiguous and, I think, over-determined. It might be thought of as both a literal sign of life and as implying a destructive force.(Schopenhauer's Will is in fact a life-force that is also a death-force.) It finds an immediate reciprocal image at the end of the sequence, in the shot of a woman apparently falling to her death.

By the same token, that ambiguous eye anticipates how in the film proper there are just two - opposed - close-ups of eyes. The first such shot shows Michael's eye when he is being examined by a doctor in the Leipzig University clinic. His ministering angel here is the worthy Dr Koska (Gisela Fischer), a member of the escape organisation known as 'Pi', and whose husband has already died for the cause.[7] Thus, by implication, what we see here is a 'good' eye, a symbol of positive action and hope. In contrast, the second close-up is of a 'bad' eye: it belongs to the vindictive ballerina (Tamara Toumanova) who is playing a creature from Hell in a performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Francesca da Rimini'.[8] (I've been using Hitchcock's own terminology here. In the bus sequence there are actually two buses. The first of these Hitchcock called the 'good' bus, its pursuer he called the 'bad' bus.)

* * *

Torn Curtain owes something to Fritz Lang's *Cloak and Dagger* (1946) whose physicist hero joins the wartime secret service and is sent to Germany to interview a kidnapped scientist. Equally, Hitchcock's film depicts a new Cold War scepticism, to be seen in novels like John Le Carré's 'The Spy Who Came In From the Cold' (filmed in 1966 by Martin Ritt) and movies like Raoul Lévy's *The Defector* (1966). In Hitchcock's case, he quickly decided that his defector would be a bogus one, and that Armstrong's trip behind the Iron Curtain to try and obtain vital information relating to his stalled Gamma Five project would comprise little more than the film's MacGuffin. Much more important would be the emotional effect of Michael's actions on Sarah, his fiancée.[9]

But even here Hitchcock had obviously done his background research. He remembered the Burgess-Maclean spy case in England and asked himself how Mrs Maclean would have felt on hearing that her husband had turned up in Russia. As for the idea of Gamma Five, here the film scored a coup. Years ahead of the US Government's official Star Wars project, the film propounds the idea of an 'anti-missile missile' system. Probably the idea came indirectly from famous physicist Edward Teller, a real-life proponent of such a system, who in 1935 had fled his alma mater at Leipzig University to work in America.

Other precedents for *Torn Curtain* are to be found in Hitchcock's own work. *Secret Agent* (1936) concerns a naïve amateur spy dispatched on a deadly mission.[10] *Saboteur* (1942) advocates being mindful of American democratic ideals and respecting human diversity, but adds a caution concerning its characters' often 'cold-hearted' and insular views.[11]

* * *

I've mentioned the inseparable nature of the concepts of Will and Representation. Dr Oliver Sacks was paraphrasing Schopenhauer when he said that to speak in terms of either concept alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of building a meaningful world.[12] This, I take it, amounts to an exhortation to be both subjective and objective at the same time. In other words, we must try to live as effective individuals in the phenomenal world yet be aware that right knowledge and values come from somewhere else: from the noumenal realm, representing what Schopenhauer called 'eternal justice' (as opposed to mere 'temporal justice').[13] However, for most of us, if we think of such matters at all, we are conscious mainly of having failed. We find that what Buddhists call 'the veil of Maya' (illusion) has clouded our vision and we have been forced into error. Certainly when Michael Armstrong penetrates the Iron Curtain, he (at best) only partially penetrates the veil of Maya ...

The early scenes of *Torn Curtain* are about Representation largely divorced from a knowledge of Will and are depicted in a literally light and playful way. Soon after Michael and Sarah arrive by ship in Copenhagen, the possibility of a united (or re-united) humankind, i.e., one without destructive duality, is raised in suitably quixotic fashion. Someone comments that the Hotel d'Angleterre is a Danish hotel whose French name means the Hotel of England. And staying at the hotel, adding its own Babel of tongues, is an international congress of physicists. Fortunately the congress members have their own common language - which nonetheless sets them apart - namely, mathematics. On the other hand, the film several times reminds us that this language has Greek origins (and uses such Greek letters as 'pi' and 'gamma'), just like democracy itself ...[14]

The Copenhagen scenes are the film's most colourful and lively. But English composer John Addison's music tells us how best to read the film's intentions here. For these scenes, Addison employs a theme recalling the signature-tune of one of J. Arthur Rank's popular but undemanding programme-fillers, the 'Look at Life' documentaries. The title logo of that series invariably showed a colourful rooster with vari-coloured tail feathers, and it carried a sub-title, 'This Colourful World'.[15] But, as I say, the series *was* lightweight.

* * *

Now, the veil of Maya never gets to be fully lifted in this phenomenal world of ours. Hitchcock kept faith with such a notion by having his cinematographer John Warren shoot the entire film through a grey gauze. On the other hand, it's pertinent to recall that Schopenhauer allowed that there might be at least two ways for us to learn *something* of the Will and its attendant 'truths'. One way involves our inner awareness of our own bodies, through which the Will flows. In times of exceeding good health, or exceeding poor health, we may be particularly conscious of the Will inside us.[16] The second way is that of art (and its analogues, e.g., certain forms of meditation). Of music, Schopenhauer said boldly that it *is* Will, or anyway a close analogue thereof; of the other aesthetic forms (e.g., fine art, literature, sculpture), he said that they somehow make the Will more objectively accessible - here he evoked Plato's Ideas. And he implied how all art involves a temporary dissolution of the individual ego in order that the more objectified knowledge may enter. As for science, Schopenhauer felt that it could deal only with the phenomenal world.

How, then, should we respond to Michael's 'defection' speech on his arrival in East Germany, in which he says his 'work is more important than any personal considerations of loyalty to any one country'? Is this where impersonal truth, truth which may bring about a united humankind, is vested?

Fairly obviously, no. At best, the speech offers a *negative* guarantee about the future: if Michael's and Lindt's work is successful, it may ensure that humanity *doesn't* blow itself up. In any case, the presence of smug officials and a large media contingent should alert us to how the occasion is again one of mere shallowness and distortion. On show is the phoney world of political speechifying, whose language falsely promises Nirvana or a new Golden Age.[17] As Schopenhauer could tell us, what is involved is the politicians' and even the scientists' perversion of 'will-to-life' for their own ends. (In this special application of his insight concerning the nature of Will, Schopenhauer anticipated Nietzsche's concept of 'will-to-power'. But Schopenhauer, let's note, detested Will which he knew to be both amoral and blind.) Significantly, Michael is lying when he announces his defection; and his underlying motive is a selfish one, concerning the cutting off by the U.S. Government of funds for his ailing research.

* * *

I'm about to describe the film's murder scene which, I'll argue, is designed to make us feel the nature of Will. (Later I'll describe the bus sequence with its emphasis on Representation.) For now, it's time to say something about Michael's Communist bodyguard Gromek (Wolfgang Kieling). He's a doughty little fellow, one of the film's many battlers.[18] True, he has acquired some unfortunate Americanisms, like his habit of chewing gum; and all his talk of having once lived in New York is certainly a sham. Even so, it's surely rather loose of critic Robin Wood to call him (as I recall) a 'lost soul'.

If the film had managed to include a key scene, soon after the murder, in which Michael encounters Gromek's twin brother at a workers' factory, we'd have learnt that Gromek had been an ordinary family man with wife and kids and holiday snaps to show for it. (The scene was shot, and provides the basis for a memorable episode remaining in the novel.)[19] In other words, we would have learnt that Gromek had been not so very different from the doughty-in-his-own-way 'Manny' Balestrero in *The Wrong Man* (1957). If that comparison sounds unlikely, consider the following. In 'MacGuffin' 20, I pointed out that Manny never really comprehends the forces that shape him. No more does Gromek. That's suggested in the small matter of how he never masters the operation of his (American?) cigarette lighter. It's also suggested by a further item that confused the 'Newsweek' film reviewer. 'Gromek', the reviewer scoffed, 'says he used to live on 88th Street and Eighth Avenue, but there is no such address in Manhattan.'[20] Quite so. Gromek's information about America has been obtained solely from the American movies and radio shows that he had been exposed to in spy school. (Cf. the novel, pp. 47, 76.) What he hasn't realised is that movies seldom tell the whole truth.

In other words, movies are typically all Representation, offering little or no insight into Will. And Gromek, even more than the religious Manny, neglects to consider the implications of this.[21] There's still another, related similarity between the two characters. Manny in *The Wrong Man* has a 'double' and several look-alikes (see 'MacGuffin' 20). *Torn Curtain* goes even further. Various characters are doubled, and there are several sets of twins (e.g., the two Gromeks). Even the good bus and the bad bus are twins, when you think about it. Now, the doubling in *The Wrong Man* implies a certain invisible interconnectedness of lives and fates which I've suggested in Manny's case is Dickensian - but a knowledge of which is unavailable to Manny as a lasting insight. More broadly, I'd say such doubling is Schopenhauerian, implying

how we (and everything else) are really just Will. In the case of *Torn Curtain*, the doubling is especially apposite. For again it stresses the idea of humanity's interconnectedness, its essential Oneness.[22]

* * *

Any discussion of the murder scene should embrace the haunting 'echoing footsteps' scene in the museum, which immediately precedes it. The two scenes are integral, in much the same way as an 'echoing footsteps' episode in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) relates, if in lighter vein, to the free-for-all in a taxidermist's workshop that follows. Both times, there's a death-and-life opposition ...

Michael visits the museum to try and elude Gromek. The setting figures naturally in the story inasmuch that East Berlin is noted for its fine museums. Significantly, the scene is introduced by an exterior view from a tourist-information brochure, followed by a dissolve which effectively allows Michael to walk into the photograph. (He's about to leave behind, perhaps for good, the 'tourist-y' shallowness of earlier scenes.) The Graeco-Roman facade dwarfs him, but the effect is accentuated once he enters the building. A high long-shot shows him crossing a tiled floor inlaid with a magnificent mandala, symbol of wholeness. In the middle of this he suddenly pauses, listening. All around him are classical columns and artifacts, though the museum seems strangely deserted of people. One feels that a timeless 'secret', representing our common heritage, awaits re-discovery here ...

Actually, the scene has another precedent, or rather two, for it combines aspects of the art gallery and sequoia forest scenes from *Vertigo* (1958). They, too, intimate timeless truths about art and life - and mortality - though it's significant that Scottie, like Armstrong, doesn't stay to heed.[23] I'm unsure how authentic the museum interior in *Torn Curtain* is. An article in 'American Cinematographer'[24] reports that only the floor of the film's museum was 'real', and that all the rest of the shot was a matte-painting. Still, you suppose that Hitchcock would have had an actual place in mind. Possibly he or his art director, Hein Heckroth,[25] was inspired by a memory of old Berlin, e.g., of the famous Hall of Pillars in Berlin Castle (demolished in 1950).

Of course, what most matters is the statement the scene makes. When Michael pauses at the very centre of the mandala, the moment combines classic German Expressionism with equally classic, and universal, symbolism. As I say, Michael is scarcely aware of any of this - he only has eyes and ears for his possible pursuer. In effect, the moment is meant for us. Nonetheless, it suggests our equivocal hero's need to look at himself, to judge what he sees (a typical German Expressionist motif),[26] and to begin an integration of ego and deep, even collective, unconscious (as Jung's work on mandala symbolism tells us). Another implication of the museum's near-emptiness is that people in this part of the world, no less than in the flashier Copenhagen scenes,[27] may not be in tune with, or have time for, such matters at present. Meanwhile, the museum continues to preserve part of our common human heritage, especially its Western aspects. The museum's statues and sculptures seem to portray mainly figures of Graeco-Roman mythology, in alternating black and white marble, and to tell a similar story of struggle to that of the film's credits. Also, an emblematic instance of that struggle is about to be played out in the film's farmhouse scene ...

Suspecting he is being followed, Michael keeps turning corners à la *Vertigo* (the sequoia forest scene, et al.), then stopping to try and identify the sound of footsteps echoing on the stone floor. Finally he leaves via a (strangely unsupervised) side door, still uncertain of where Gromek may be. In the street, a housewife trudges past the museum's long stone wall. Such walls figure prominently in the film, a reminder of the Berlin Wall itself and the country's divided condition.[28] Needing to hurry to an assignation with his 'Pi' contact outside the city, Michael takes a taxi. The driver has what the novel calls 'an incurious, pleasantly stupid face' (p. 69). He wears a pale open-necked shirt, making him an older version of the 'demure' and 'mild' identical twins we'll later see on the bus (pp. 149-50). Michael feels in luck.

* * *

There are no echoing tile floors, or pavements, at the farm where Michael arrives by taxi.[29] He's met by a pleasant *Frau* (Carolyn Conwell) in an apron. With his shoe he draws the 'Pi' sign in the farmyard dirt. The woman points to a field where her husband is driving a tractor.

The farmer (Mort Mills) is described in the novel by one of his 'Pi' colleagues as 'the finest' of men (p. 176). In the film he's represented by the actor who played the highway patrolman in *Psycho* (1960), and commands a voice like that of Physics Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg! (The novel, though, gives him an accent that is 'pure lower-class Southern', hinting that he's a former American Serviceman - p. 71.) His hearty first line both makes a plot point and is suitably thematic: 'Well, Professor Armstrong, how does it feel to play the part of a dirty defector?'

Both the farmer and his wife have their 'doubles'. The moustached farmer is a more robust version of Michael's Copenhagen contact, the bookstore proprietor named Freddy (Arthur Gould-Porter).[30] And the farmer's wife strikingly

resembles another brave 'Pi' member, Dr Koska at the University of Leipzig. The truth is that Michael himself is one of the few characters in the film who lacks a physical double. But the reason for this, I suggest, isn't that he's played by the inimitable Paul Newman. More likely, it's because, in the film's terms, he has failed to achieve a suitable merger with society, especially the demos, the people, a merger which the film is now increasingly going to insist on. For instance, it's about to deprive him of his distinctive overcoat ...[31]

As the farmer drives Michael back towards the farmhouse, the 'Pi' music starts up. Michael dismounts and the farmer deftly swings the tractor round and returns to work. Nearby are the remnants of an outhouse wall, a variant of the war ruins we've seen in Berlin (and one more reminder of the Berlin Wall). For the moment, Michael probably feels he's far from all that.

So when the 'Pi' music ends with an abrupt crash, the arrival of Gromek is doubly jolting. Moreover, the little fellow has put himself between Michael and the waiting taxi, and Michael must duck into the farmhouse. Quickly Gromek follows him. The ensuing scene is played without music.

Music would be redundant, and distracting, in a scene which Hitchcock said he designed 'to show how hard it is to kill a man'.[32] Inside the farmhouse, watched by the woman, Gromek has got Michael cornered. He soon shows he can get tough when he jabs at Michael's coat with an accusing fist - and, employing a 'subjective' effect, the film jabs *us* by excising a few frames from the middle of each shot. But next minute he's cracking jokes, speculating that Michael is headed for 'the Big House' as in certain Edward G. Robinson prison movies.[33]

Also, Gromek appears to have read some of the American press reviews of *The Birds* and *Marnie* ('It's strictly for the boids. You still say that.') The poor fellow virtually asks to be dispatched, like some stand-up comedian who has outstayed his welcome. I don't think I'm being callous in claiming this; at some level, the audience surely feels the working of just such a crazy logic as I'm implying. Compelled to watch a protracted and messy killing, we need to find something to laugh at. Of course, Hitchcock compounds the effect in various ways. Just to list what happens shows one of them: Gromek dies from a combination of a saucepan of scalding soup thrown in his face, a kitchen knife embedded in his shoulder, blows to his shins delivered with the edge of a spade, and finally asphyxiation in a gas oven. Only unexceptional, homely implements are used, notice.[34]

But Michael has got blood on his hands. And on his coat. Now he really is 'dirty'. And his shocked face clearly shows the sort of dissolution of ego Schopenhauer referred to (albeit with less drastic circumstances in mind). Above all, for the scene's participants, as well as for the audience, Will has been made palpable.[35] The rest of this article looks at how in subsequent scenes the film applies our new knowledge of Will, especially during the sequence on the bus, and considers the lessons to be drawn.

* * *

Something else that Hitchcock remarked about the murder scene is revealing. He fully intended, he said, that the death of a man from asphyxiation in a gas oven should evoke Auschwitz. So far as I know, he didn't say why he intended it, but we may guess. Probably he was remembering how it was in just such tranquil surroundings as those of this German farm that some of the extermination camps operated. Further, we know that in 1945 Hitchcock was summoned by his friend Sidney Bernstein and the British Ministry of Information to supervise and edit footage of the camps. As the film flooded in, he could hardly bear to watch it.[36]

When Michael and Sarah escape from Leipzig to East Berlin, they do so on a 'Pi' bus which passes itself off as the route's regular bus. In charge of the escape is the Jew, Mr Jacobi (David Opatoshu). It's his quick thinking which at one point saves the couple from being recognised by searching police; and his coolness which prevents dissenting voices among the bus passengers, including an hysterical *Fraulein's*, from erupting into disaster. Connotations of the War are strong here, too.

However, a further connotation stresses the scene's element of diversity, its mix of people. Jacobi himself is another of the film's doubles: with his goatee, he resembles Professor Lindt. And though nearly all the passengers on the bus are members of 'Pi', they're a motley lot. They include a little man with a cold, a student and his girlfriend, identical twin brothers, and the hysterical Fraulein Mann. In short, they collectively resemble groups encountered in at least two other Hitchcock films having a pro-democracy message: *Saboteur* (with its bizarre circus troupe) and *Lifeboat* (1944). They are all ordinary-enough people, and for that reason represent those from whom Michael and Sarah have been shielded by their ivory-tower existence back in Washington, D.C. (With particular irony, Sarah in the novel is a Senator's daughter - p. 53.)[37]

Now, both the film and the novel are ambivalent about 'Pi'. Given a divisive, and divided, humanity, it's clear that an organisation like 'Pi' can't do much about the fundamental problem. (Again one may recall Schopenhauer's distinction between imperfect 'temporal' justice and ideal 'eternal' justice.) Besides, the members of 'Pi' are as capable of dissension and limited thinking as anyone. The novel is largely being polite when it calls some of the bus passengers 'nice' and 'well-meaning' (p. 149) - one thinks of Carol Fisher's remark in *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) about 'well-meaning' but ineffectual 'amateurs'. On the other hand, as many earlier Hitchcock films stress, it's almost a necessity that the hero (himself essentially an amateur) eventually makes a stand for what he believes in. Arguably, *Torn Curtain* doesn't disagree with that, but it does imply the importance of wisdom. Through the characters of Michael and Sarah, it shows the need to integrate public action and private insight, and to fuse knowledge of Will and of Representation.

As the film progresses, Michael increasingly questions the nature of appearances, and not just from a scientist's perspective. On the whole, he becomes more pessimistic. Note, for example, the quotation from the novel that heads this article, a very Schopenhauerian observation. Though the passengers on the bus represent demos, they also resemble the audience watching the film; and one of the characteristics of a film audience is that its members may seem a cohesive unit but really aren't, certainly not once the house-lights return. Of course, most of us are stimulated by group company. So it's understandable that the bus passengers see fit to applaud their collective performance. That moment gives us one of the film's few fleeting warm spots. But watch the bus passengers scatter afterwards, thereby anticipating the end of the ballet scene that soon follows - another dispersed audience. Audiences, like the ideal of democracy itself, are very vulnerable ...

Still, something else the bus scene shows is how a logical outcome of human selfishness (which is an aspect of Will), i.e., finding oneself in the cold, may sometimes be confounded by a no-less-human inconsistency (which we may call fellow-feeling). I'm not sure that Schopenhauer sufficiently acknowledged such a possibility.[38] However, the film's downbeat ending *is* generally pessimistic. Only a few moments, like the bus sequence, and some 'hopeful' signifiers, like the twins/doubles motif, have left us something firm to cling to. Their message seems to be: we're all both like and unlike each other. Each of the passengers on the bus is both universal Will *and* individual 'will' - in the latter case, sometimes inconveniently or irritatingly so. Accordingly, there's an ethical imperative here. We must sufficiently penetrate the veil of Maya to see that Representation (appearance) isn't everything.

* * *

Michael and Sarah are promptly tested on how well they have learnt the lessons of the bus sequence. Few people could appear potentially more inconvenient or irritating than the scatty Countess Kuchinska, who approaches the American couple in the street. She's a displaced person, a former Polish aristocrat. though it's not inappropriate that she's played by Russian-French actress Lila Kedrova fresh from an Academy Award-winning performance in Michael Cacoyannis's *Zorba the Greek* (1964). In the *Torn Curtain* novel the Countess proclaims, 'I am an old woman. But there is *la vie* left in me. Lots of *la vie*' (p. 168). The film signals as much by giving her a multi-coloured scarf. Now, it would be easy for Michael and Sarah to dismiss her as of no more consequence to them than one of the tourists back in Copenhagen - in effect, their own former selves. But that would be seeing only half the picture.

Of course, the situation is ambiguous. The Countess, it turns out, can direct the couple to their next contact-point, the Friedrichstrasse Post Office. At the same time, she's happy to force the issue by employing a spot of blackmail, for she hopes that Michael and Sarah will sponsor her to the United States. That is, she's like everyone else in having a selfish side. Her double is Michael's nemesis-figure, the ballerina, inasmuch that both of these rather theatrical ladies wants her place in the sun; for the ballerina, that largely means the spotlight of public acclaim,[39] for the Countess it means having somewhere to enjoy her remaining *vie*. Before the end, the film will have implied that both ambitions are by themselves inadequate. But meanwhile, with whatever mixed motives of their own, Michael and Sarah agree to the Countess's deal.

* * *

Another test comes when the couple seek to make their final 'Pi' contact by attending an evening at the ballet. The scene was shot on the set where *The Phantom of the Opera* had been filmed twice (in 1925 and 1943); film buffs may also detect in the scene allusions to such classic movies as *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Hangover Square* (1944). With State Security closing in, some bravura gesture seems called for. Michael provides it when he turns the on-stage artifice to his own purpose with an inspired shout of Fire!', causing a general panic in which he and Sarah manage to escape. The stage flames, depicting Hell, neatly combine the film's symbol of Will (life-energy)[40] with what is patently Representation. By being able to merge - or rather, separate - the two aspects in his mind, Michael may be said to pass this test, too.

* * *

But perhaps the final emphasis of the present article should be on the fact of the successive tests themselves. I've always thought of *Torn Curtain* as giving Michael and Sarah (and the audience) an initiation into deeper knowledge. My early notes on the film, made about the time I saw it on its first release, include a definition of initiation as a three-stage process: 'a rite of submission, followed by a period of containment, and then by a further rite of liberation'. Regrettably, I've no record of the source of that quotation. But it's likely that it came from Jung or one of his followers. Certainly Jung's 'Man and His Symbols' (1964) had recently been published in London - moreover, it's the sort of book Hitchcock himself might have consulted -[41] and it contained similar points about the psychology of initiation, etc.[42] As well, it carried Jung's keynote comment about how the world had become 'dissociated like a neurotic, with the Iron Curtain marking the symbolic line of division'.

Accordingly, I think we may sum up *Torn Curtain* as follows. The film is suggesting that the veil of Maya will continue to screen the heavenly clarity of Nirvana from us for some time yet. Equally, there can be no early prospect of one united humankind. All the more reason, then, why each of us should give thought to plotting our particular *inward* path. We may find there many of the sources of our problems. And not the least of those problems may simply be one of getting started. In Michael Armstrong's case, his inward journey appears to begin in a well-known fashion when he suffers a career setback (the halting of his Gamma Five project), which in turn affects his sense of self-esteem.

It's worth specifying the more obvious areas where Michael's perceptions are going to be altered or enlarged. For a start, both the museum and ballet scenes have hinted at how insulated from cultural matters, and the humanities generally, he has been. Near the end of the novel he muses that when he gets back home, 'he must make a point of broadening himself, going to ballet and maybe opera and reading some novels' (p. 177). Similarly, the scenes where he must literally make contact with ordinary people (the farm, the factory canteen, the bus) show how shielded from the roots of democracy his career has made him. The word 'democracy' is Greek - derived: from 'demos', the people, and 'kratos', strength. Yet if Michael knows anything at all of his Greek heritage, you feel that his knowledge relates just to his specialist fields of mathematics and physics. As for his relation to the natural world (represented by the Norwegian fjord, the farm, and finally the open sea), clearly that has also been largely off-limits for him. Sarah implies no less when she chides him in Copenhagen, 'A scientist is supposed to respect a natural order in all things'. The egoistical and too-intellectual Michael has been immured from Nature, reality, since before the film began. But a dissolution of his ego, something envisaged as desirable, even necessary, by both Schopenhaur and Jung, soon begins.[43]

There seems to be three ways in which Michael and Sarah undergo a process of submission/containment/ liberation. In a very broad sense, they do so as the rest of us do it, by being born and entering on the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Less broadly, they undertake such a process when they go behind the Iron Curtain, experience various tests and perils there, and then effect their escape (in the end, by swimming to safety from an East German ship, which reminds at least one commentator of 'traversing ... the river Styx').[44] But even individual scenes pointedly follow the same pattern. The essential element of containment is stressed in the murder scene (the slammed-shut windows, the ripping out of the telephone, even Gromek's death by asphyxiation in a gas oven), the blackboard sequence in Professor Lindt's underground workroom, the bus sequence (although Fraulein Mann has to be expelled from the vehicle before the journey's end), and the ballet scene where armed Vopos arrive to guard each exit. And in case we've failed to spot the motif already, Hitchcock has Michael and Sarah finally smuggled out of the country in costume baskets belonging to the ballet company, on a ship bound for Sweden.

It comes to-this. One of Jung's colleagues, Joseph L. Henderson, says that the purpose of initiation rites is always 'to create the symbolic mood of death from which may spring the symbolic mood of rebirth'.[45] Michael Armstrong is subjected to a succession of deaths and rebirths, each time having his eyes opened a little further to the - often Hellish but also grand - scheme of things, even as he and Sarah learn a new humility and maturity. Yet, precisely as a result, the two of them can huddle thankfully at last beneath the grey blanket provided by the Swedish assistant harbourmaster (who adds a further humbling perspective by noting, 'We keep a whole stack of blankets for refugees').

* * *

I've my own thoughts on why *Torn Curtain* doesn't work as well as it might have, and they've little to do with Donald Spoto's questionable claim that the film has 'dated hopelessly since 1990 [sic]'.[46] In general, the film is just too downbeat and perhaps too philosophical for some audiences to enjoy.[47] And here's a more particular observation. Michael never makes more common cause with other people than when at the ballet he looks at the stage flames and yells 'Fire!', thus prompting a latent fear - of any audience indoors - to erupt in onscreen panic. But of course he's not really making common cause with the audience at the ballet at all, and that fact works against the scene's full effectiveness. The moment feels unconvincing and contrived. Even so, I've suggested that *philosophically* the concept is promising: a comment on the fragility of collective identity. A problem, I think, is the stolidity of Paul Newman's character from the start. Confusingly, his shout of 'Fire!' shows real quick-wittedness of a dramatic life-and-death kind. Accordingly, the scene

and the film needed a more endowed actor (a Gary Cooper, say). Michael is consistently too bland a character to excite strong viewer-feelings, whether of identification/admiration or just of sardonic appraisal.[48]

Likewise, Julie Andrews is wasted and unconvincing as a campus wife-to-be (or a 'corridor wife', which Sarah fears she may become). It seems almost emblematic that her strongest scene is her thirty seconds of silence in the Leipzig University lecture room after Lindt has asked her about the outcome of Gamma Five. (Her eventual, guarded answer: 'I have nothing to say.')[49] Another of the Americans' minders, Professor Karl Manfred (Günter Strack), clearly fancies her; and there seems to have been some attempted 'influence' by Manfred while Michael was at the farm. On Michael's return from there, he's summoned by Gerhard and told that Sarah has been persuaded to come over to the East Germans. This is where we hear about Manfred's 'unique line in argument'.[50] Manfred remains possessive towards Sarah, at Leipzig even taking it upon himself to answer when Lindt asks a question of Michael, 'Have you your assistant [i.e., Sarah] with you?' Of course, all of this is resolved immediately afterwards in the controversial hillock scene (which I find tacky rather than liberating), but my point is that Sarah's key moments are significantly either static or coy or take place off-screen.

Finally, Hitchcock was surely right when he once said of his brand of thriller, 'The better the villain, the better the picture'. Unfortunately, the overt villainy in *Torn Curtain* is mainly conceptual - a matter of ideology - and I have real difficulty in thinking of its representatives - Gromek, Gerhard, Manfred - as anything but generally likable, and subject to the same Will as the rest of us. No doubt, most of this was intended by Hitchcock, but what does it do to the dynamics of his film?

* * *

Postscript. More about the grey blanket that ends the film. That image goes all the way back to *Number Seventeen* via *Psycho*. Of course, it signifies coming out of the cold. But equally, and quite literally in *Torn Curtain*, it signifies turning one's back on the world, of having 'had enough'. It's interesting, therefore, that the *happiest* character in the film is so decidedly Professor Lindt, ensconced behind the Iron Curtain, which is also grey. But then, as we saw, Lindt is a self-described 'genius', like Dr Brulov in *Spellbound* or Sam Marlowe in *The Trouble With Harry*. And as Schopenhauer claims, only the genius, the artist and the saint regularly penetrate the veil of Maya, which so defeats everyone else. As I see the matter, the one optimistic connotation of the grey blanket which Michael and Sarah draw around themselves is this: like the word 'couple', it makes duality one. Oliver Sacks would surely understand and approve a certain symbolism here.

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Notes

1. The novel was published by Dell in 1966 to coincide with the release of the film. It appears to adhere closely to the original screenplay, i.e., pre-dating the film's last-minute modifications. I consider it an authentic, and useful, research tool for scholars of the film, and quote from it several times during the present article.

2. This particular English version of Schopenhauer's essay appears in A. Schopenhauer, 'Essays and Aphorisms' (Penguin Classics, 1970), translated and selected by R.J. Hollingdale.

3. Hitchcock obtained the shot of the flame by sending a camera team to the Rocketdyne works where Saturn engines for the Apollo moon flight were tested. 'We were able to go out and photograph just the core of the flame and steam from half a mile away with a long-focus lens. ... On the morning they shot, $34,000 worth of fuel was used for just three takes! We didn't pay, they were testing.' ('Film' [UK], Summer 1966, p.15.)

4. Several times the film evokes myth, especially Greek myth. Here you naturally think of Prometheus's successful attempt to steal fire from the gods and give it to humankind (though Armstrong, unlike Prometheus, is no disinterested agent). The scene also has Oedipal connotations, which may make you think of the overthrow of the aging Dr Murchison in *Spellbound* (1945).

5. Another such figure is the brilliant, if irascible, Dr Brulov in *Spellbound*. Brulov is that film's 'good' father-figure, Murchison its 'bad' father-figure. Lindt combines something of both these men, which is fitting, given *Torn Curtain*'s emphasis on the virtual interchangability of 'good' and 'bad'. (Shades, here, of Hamlet's 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.') In turn, both what the French critics call the 'transference of guilt' motif in Hitchcock's films, and Schopenhauer's emphasis on how, finally, it's all One - there is nothing but amoral Will - are other relevant considerations which the present article emphasises. Incidentally, the present article should ideally be read in conjunction

with an analysis by me of Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) due for publication in March 2001 on the 'Screening the Past' website (La Trobe University, Australia).

6. The film contains repeated allusions to fire (and coldness: its last shot again makes reference to both). Some are almost subliminal: e.g., the Norwegian ship at the start is 'M/S Meteor', while the name of the Elmo Bookstore suggests St Elmo's Fire. Others are more overt, notably the scene in the theatre discussed in the text. Fire is like pure Will; its opposite, coldness, is like a metaphor for mere random events and knowledge, the superficial world that entrammels us all, and where we seek what human warmth we can. See in particular the text's discussion of the museum, farm, and bus sequences.

7. See the novel, p. 132.

8. The vain, egotistical ballerina and her vindictiveness represent what the film opposes on all of its levels, including the political - which isn't to deny that there's something of these qualities in everyone, including Armstrong himself. Schopenhauer taught the same thing when he said that we're all made up of basic egoism plus malice and compassion - though the amounts and proportions vary widely in different individuals.

9. In the first half of the film, Sarah must endure hurt and doubt out of loyalty to Michael. The motif here - of 'suffering in silence' - is a familiar and effective one in stage and film melodrama. It can be found, for instance, in the various film versions (based on the 1909 play) of *Madame X*, in the Australian film *The Silence of Dean Maitland* (1914, remade in 1934), and in such Hitchcock films as *The Manxman* (1928), *Under Capricorn* (1949), and *I Confess* (1953).

10. There is even a shot, when the police arrive at Leipzig University to arrest Michael, that almost exactly matches a shot in *Secret Agent* of the police seen from an upstairs window arriving at the chocolate factory to arrest Ashenden and 'The General'.

11. In the circus scene of *Saboteur*, which prefigures the bus scene in *Torn Curtain*, the character known as 'Bones' (Pedro de Cordoba) speaks of normal people being 'normally cold-hearted'. This also anticipates the later film, notably its warm/cold motif.

12. O. Sacks, 'Awakenings' (revised edition, 1982), p. 219.

13. The noumenal is Kant's famous and unknowable 'Ding an Sich'/'Thing-in-Itself', which Schopenhauer took to be the same as the world's 'Will', or vital principle, as opposed to its mere manifestation as myriad phenomena, 'Representation'. So we have the One and the Many. Incidentally, I don't think Schopenhauer's concept of Will can be easily dismissed as mysticism. I notice, for instance, that Stephen Jay Gould recently wrote: 'I would nominate as most worthy of pure awe the continuity of the tree of earthly life for 3.5 billion years, without a single microsecond of disruption.' (S. Gould, "This View of Life"/ "I Have Landed", in 'Natural History', December 2000/ January 2001, reprinted on the 'Natural History' website.) Such continuity sounds closely akin to the notion of a single indestructible vital force, Will.

14. The novel contains a significant piece of dialogue when an impatient Professor Lindt mocks his colleagues' dithering. "'The day has come [he says] when our universities are staffed from the barnyard. Pigs teach Greek, horses teach German, and chickens teach physics. A great age."' (p. 108) This idea of a noble heritage (e.g., our *Greek* heritage) debased in times that are 'out of joint' runs through the film. It may also remind us of similar motifs in *Jamaica Inn* (1939) - where post-Byronic decadence (especially in remote Cornwall) has set in following the high Romantic Age - and *North by Northwest* (1959), where art (including Pre-Columbian figurines) has been debased to the level of one more commodity.

15. *Torn Curtain* uses colour as a metaphor of 'life' in its broad Representational aspect (e.g., the colourful tartan blanket beneath which Michael and Sarah engage in careless love-play early in the film; the equally colourful scarf worn by the Countess Kuchinska who announces in the novel that she has plenty of *la vie* left in her), and is contrasted with the drab grey of East Berlin generally and of the grey blanket beneath which Michael and Sarah retreat at the film's end - signalling a narrowing down, a loss of expectation.

16. This observation is mine, not Schopenhauer's, but I think it suitably conveys his meaning.

17. Shortly before Hitchcock's film was made, Carl Jung observed that the Communist world had one big myth, 'the time-hallowed archetypal dream of a Golden Age (or Paradise)'. But he was quick to add that the Western world, too, was 'in the grip of the same mythology'. See C. G. Jung (ed.), 'Man and His Symbols' (1964), p. 85. Certainly the film implies something of this idea by shooting several of the East German scenes in a honey-coloured oblique sunlight.

Perhaps equally, you sense an affinity with George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' (1949) with its oppressive regime and, initially, its characters' dream of 'the Golden Country'.

18. Watch him in action shouldering his way through the crush after Michael's press conference! Typically, he can afterwards manage a grin or a joke. By contrast, note the grim fellow among the 'swells' when panic breaks out at the ballet, who looks like an unredeemed W. C. Fields.

19. We reprint the episode in this issue of 'The MacGuffin'.

20. 'Newsweek', August 8, 1966. The review is unsigned.

21. 'But' [writes Oliver Sacks] 'how shall we unite the "final cause" with the "efficient [immediate] cause", the will with the matter, the motive with the molecule, when they seem so remote, and disparate from each other?' ('Awakenings', op. cit., pp. 219-20.) Sacks finds *one* answer to that question in a certain use of colloquial language, employing 'terms which unite in their two-facedness the concepts of structure and intention - words like *plan* and *design* [-] ... which we - as scientists - so often feel impelled to reject and ignore' (p.220).

22. As I say in my already-mentioned article on *The Birds*, the famous 'transference of guilt' motif in Hitchcock, first noted by the French critics, implies the same idea.

23. Gromek comments sardonically: 'In one door and out the other. What's wrong, Professor? Don't you like our museum?' Cf the motif in *Vertigo* of Scottie repeatedly entering a church or chapel and then immediately exiting again.

24. 'American Cinematographer', October 1966.

25. The German Heckroth's most famous work was done for Michael Powell's *The Red Shoes* (1948), a film to which Hitchcock seems to allude more than once in his own films: e.g., the ballet scene of *Torn Curtain*.

26. According to Dr Margery Morgan of Monash University, Australia, in a lecture I attended many years ago, a recurrent motif of German Expressionist art, etc, often signalled by converging lines painted on the set or canvas, was the need of the protagonist to bring himself to judgment in his own mind.

27. Where, too, a young 'hippie' named Magda (!), working in the Elmo Bookstore, removes apparently dusty Bibles to a storeroom.

28. Michael delivers his 'defection' speech at the East Berlin airport against a red-tiled background that suggests a brick wall; Gerhard's office has a grey stone wall; Sarah's room at the hotel is photographed in such a way as to emphasise its walls and the stage-like (or box-like) look of the set. See also next note.

29. The farm recalls the crofters' cottage in *The 39 Steps* (1935), both even having a similar box-bed in the kitchen wall. (The sound of hens in the farmyard is another point of overlap.) Given that the film contains a 'boxes' motif - the characters are forever being confined to small spaces (including the costume baskets in which Michael and Sarah finally escape from East Germany), perhaps Hitchcock included the box-bed as one such reference. For the record, there was a popular song at the time called, I think, 'Little Boxes', which had a similar motif, and concluded with the thought that we all depart the world in one more such box!

30. Freddy actually wears a hearing-aid, which may remind you of the gentleman with the hearing problem in *North by Northwest* (the scene in the Oak Bar), one of that film's many allusions to aging and mortality in the minor characters. (Surrealistically, the principals appear not to be beset with any such problems!)

31. A variant, this, on how characters in *Number Seventeen* (1932), *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), *North by Northwest*, and *The Birds*, for example, remove a hat or a jacket before getting down to physical action at the film's climax.

32. He also said he designed it to show how *long* it takes to kill a man - which seems significant, given the film's recurring emphasis on the stretching or protraction of time and events. (I briefly discuss this matter in my book, 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', Titan Books, London, 1999, p. 173, where I conclude that it is all connected with showing how *alike*, as well as *unique*, people are - that we each occupy our own rightful time and space, and that we're each part of one collective human community.)

33. A likely example of such a film is Edward Ludwig's *The Last Gangster* (1937), a clip from which is included, I notice, in Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanours* (1989).

34. The basis for this scene, though, may well be the clumsy, drawn-out murder of the Earl of Clarence in Shakespeare's 'Richard III' (Act One, Scene Four). Hitchcock alluded to the Shakespeare play when he addressed a class of cinema students at the University of Southern California. See my article, "Out of Hitchcock's Filing Cabinet", on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website.

35. As I say, though, music wasn't called for. Music may indeed be a close analogue of Will, but by that very fact would be superfluous here.

36. Not all of the concentration camps were isolated from population centres - something which Hitchcock noted at an early stage of planning the BMI film. By means of panning and tracking shots he was able to bring home this fact. See Elizabeth Sussex's article, "The Fate of F3080", in 'Sight & Sound', Spring 1984.

37. That ivory-tower existence stands in contrast to the getting-one's-hands-dirty learning experience that Armstrong, in particular, undergoes during the film.

38. Earlier in the film, Gerhard (Hanjörg Felmy) of State Security had referred to a colleague's 'unique line in argument, combining mathematical logic and romantic inconsistency' - which sounded vaguely threatening but may in fact represent Hitchcock's own 'solution' to the fundamental problem of a divided, and divisive, humanity. Incidentally, an aspect of the bus sequence reminds us that another American couple abroad, on a bus filled with Arabs, was once told by a beaming Frenchman, 'There are moments in life when we all need a little help'. I'm thinking, of course, of Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956).

39. In 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 1, I mentioned how the film's business with the ballerina and the press photographers may have been suggested to Hitchcock by an embarrassing incident that had happened to him when he was staying at Lake Como in Italy. (This occurred some years before 1970, so the timing seems to fit.) As the person recounting the story remembers the incident, 'I think he was actually a little offended when we told him that [the photographers] were not there for him but for the wedding.'

40. Besides the on-stage flames, there's a fiery sun painted on the stage back-cloth.

41. Hitchcock's library in his office contained an impressive collection of art books and current magazines on graphics. (The Jung book mentioned in the text is profusely illustrated with pictures of classic paintings, stills from films, etc.) See Stephen Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of *Psycho*' (1991), p. 142.

42. More recently, screenwriter Michael Eaton has said that 'the structure of the thriller narrative exactly corresponds to that of a rite of passage.' See his "Thrilling Rituals" in 'Sight & Sound', August 1991.

43. This, then, represents the breaking down of walls *of a kind*. Note that the word 'immure' comes from the Latin *murus*, a wall.

44. Gorham A. Kindem, "Towards a Semiotic Theory of Visual Communication in the Cinema", Ph. D. dissertation (Arno Press, 1980), p. 212. Note the citing of another Greek myth here.

45. Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient myths and modern man", in Jung, op. cit., p. 132.

46. D. Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992), p. 354.

47. Actually, '*Torn Curtain* attracted a surprisingly large audience, generating more domestic rental income (approximately $7 million) for its distributor (MCA/Universal) than any of Hitchcock's other films after *Psycho*'. Robert E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992), p. 264 (n. 27).

48. This is one of those scenes mentioned in an earlier footnote whose conceptual basis seems to be Hitchcock's attempt to stretch or protract time and events.

49. Nonetheless, our feelings for Michael fluctuate as the film advances. In the case of the film as first conceived, our feelings would have been admiring, if not without irony. Hitchcock originally wanted to end the film with Michael, having arrived in Sweden, burning Lindt's formula in the fire. But commercial considerations precluded such a scene. See L. Furhammar & F. Isaksson, 'Politics and Film' (1971), p. 141.

50. A film like *The Birds* also seems to posit 'mathematical logic and romantic inconsistency' as the way to go, inasmuch as the film ends with the Brenners prudently fleeing their home but taking the emblematic love-birds with them. (Cf my point above about the show of fellow-feeling in the *Torn Curtain* bus sequence.) In turn, I see that ambiguous ending as akin to others (e.g., of *Shadow of a Doubt*) where the filmmakers seem torn between regret for a lost paradise (with connotations of closure and 'incest') and acknowledgment of the need for 'life' to renew itself (by allowing the wider world to re-enter). As the present text emphasises, *Torn Curtain* seems to be about the need to think 'dualistically'. The phrase 'mathematical logic and romantic inconsistency' particularly reminds me of Charles Dickens's critique in his novel 'Hard Times' (1854) of the mechanical Mr Bounderby, 'a man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and is not to be talked into allowing for anything over'.

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Some further relevant information is on our website, whose Index page is at <www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

ODD SPOT: 'G-R-O-M-E-K'

Hitchcock, we now know (thanks to research by Dan Auiler and Bill Krohn), regularly watched other directors' movies, often privately at the studio but also at Gary Graver's repertory cinema in San Francisco (where Hitch would invariably be accompanied by wife Alma). In 1954, when Hitch was making *Rear Window* for Paramount, that studio released the colourful spy comedy *Knock On Wood*, set in Paris, Zurich, and London, as a vehicle for Danny Kaye. Sadly, Norman Panama and Melvin Frank's script and direction were pedestrian; however, the film still proved a success at the box office. Hence, perhaps, shortly afterwards, Hitchcock dusted down the script of his 1934 spy classic, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, set in the Swiss Alps and London, and began remaking it: he wanted to show how such a story *should* be done, and to achieve another popular success for Paramount after *The Trouble With Harry* (1955) had proved rather too specialised in its humour for general audiences. There is plenty of evidence that Hitchcock indeed saw *Knock On Wood*, but perhaps none more striking than the name of one of that film's bumbling, ill-fated spies, Gromek (Leon Askin), who twice spells out his surname in full - almost exactly as the bumbling, ill-fated character named Gromek does in Hitchcock's spy drama *Torn Curtain* (1966). The fact that the latter film climaxes in a theatre, at a performance of a ballet, offers a further parallel with the earlier film. [This 'Odd Spot' was inspired by a query posted on the <alt.movies.hitchcoock> newsgroup.]

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Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 28 | May 2002 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

Infamous last words! 'The MacGuffin' #27 proclaimed that another issue would soon follow. (Remember?!) In the event, we took our longest 'vacation' ever! Gentle reader, apologies, and it shouldn't happen again. Your fond Editor sought only to make for himself a 'well-balanced existence', then found to his dismay that the adage about more-is-less (and its corollary, less-is-more) applied. But now he humbly offers you 'MacGuffin' #28. May it give you pleasure and edification - of a Hitchcockian kind, naturally. Read on for details.

More than half of the issue consists of a review of just two books: Bill Krohn's 'Hitchcock At Work' and Steven L. DeRosa's 'Writing With Hitchcock'. The review speaks for itself, so comment here would be superfluous. Below, I'll mention some other books (and videos) that should have been reviewed this issue but must now be held over.

Hearty thanks to college lecturer Paul Fahey in California. Not only did Paul attend and then review for us the first-ever 'official' stage production based on Hitchcock's *Rope*, but he also interviewed its director, Jack Shouse, who made various insightful and illuminating comments, as recorded here.

John Charles Bennett is the son of distinguished actor-and-playwright-turned-screenwriter Charles Bennett (1899-1995) who arguably twice set Hitchcock on a career trajectory that would carry him to the pinnacle of his profession. CB's meaty melodrama 'Blackmail' was turned by Hitchcock (and screenwriter Benn Levy) into the most famous of the director's films of the twenties; a few years later, CB wrote or contributed to five of Hitchcock's 'golden' thrillers of the thirties, starting with *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. (CB wrote the original story of *TMWKTM* and parts of the final screenplay, though he got no on-screen credit for helping with the adaptation; on *Young and Innocent* he left to begin his Hollywood career before finishing the script which was taken over by Alma Reville and Hitchcock himself.) By courtesy of John Bennett, the 'MacGuffin' website carries an excerpt from CB's 'Memoirs', including part of the murder scene from 'Blackmail' - many of whose details were retained by Hitchcock's 1929 film. What this issue contains is a previously unpublished list of the scripts that CB then wrote, or in some cases probably only contemplated writing, for British International Pictures. Compiled by John Bennett from his father's notebooks, it has obvious historical interest.

We thank our 'resident' film critics for their ten-best lists published this issue. The lists span two years this time (separate lists for each year, naturally). We also extend gratitude to those of our readers who were in touch about various matters by email and/or letter. Our popular 'Letters' page returns below.

Back to apology mode. Books received since our last issue are: Richard Allen & Sam Ishii-Gonzalès (eds), 'Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays' (BFI Publishing); Susan Smith, 'Hitchcock: Suspense, Humour and Tone' (BFI); Charles Barr, '*Vertigo*' (BFI Film Classics); John Belton (ed.), 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*' (Cambridge Film Handbooks); and Paul Jensen, 'Hitchcock Becomes "Hitchcock": The British Years' (Midnight Marquee Press). All of these have been reviewed and discussed on our website, or elsewhere on the Web, but none could be reviewed here. Possibly next time. The same goes for a couple of VHS tapes received. One is available, I understand, from Midnight Marquee Press Inc., 9721 Britanay Lane Baltimore, MD 21234 (410-665-1198; <www.Midmar.com>), and consists of a panel discussion chaired by Paul M. Jensen in which the panelists are Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell, Janet Leigh, and Dorothy Herrmann (daughter of composer Bernard Herrmann). Good, solid stuff, and delightful people. The other tape, called 'Alfred Hitchcock', comes from Creative Arts Television Archive, P.O. Box 739, Kent, CT 06757 (<catarchive@aol.com>). It contains two interviews with Hitchcock, the first conducted by Ingrid Bergman's daughter, Pia Lindstrom, and frequently charming: Hitch had known Pia since she was a baby (though by the time of the interview she was news correspondent with WCVS-TV). Among the highlights: Hitchcock recalls a moment of real fear he experienced when travelling at night by car with Alma on a narrow road in the former Yugoslavia, 8,000 feet above a valley. Suddenly a bus loomed ahead ... The second interview is conducted in knowledgeable fashion by the late film historian, William Everson. One item of interest: Hitchcock describes part of the opening of *The Lodger* in which the

camera pans from the murdered girl to a reflection in the Thames of the sign 'Tonight Golden Curls', then back up the Embankment to a milling crowd of onlookers. This makes the film's opening sound more than ever like the opening of *Frenzy*, and suggests that Ivor Montagu, hired by the producers to 'tighten' the film, may have cut felicitous material as well as 'extraneous' footage. (The pan to the river is not seen in extant prints.)

Now, several other books on Hitchcock have appeared in the past year or so. There's a near-complete listing on our website, but certainly one of the most exciting of these books is 'Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences', whose English publication coincided with the 'Hitchcock & Art' exhibition held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and later transferred to Paris. ((I thank Pierre Poirier for obtaining me a copy of the English edition.) Another stimulating book is 'The Hitchcock Murders' (Faber) by Peter Conrad of Oxford University. We'll have more to say about both books next time.

Finally, in view of our intention next time to publish detailed analyses of Hitchcock's first film, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925), and his last film, *Family Plot* (1976), let me commend to readers the Hitchcock-centred website of Al Chafin in Florida. Al has for sale many rare videos, DVDs, scripts, etc. Among the videos are two versions of *The Pleasure Garden* (they correspond to the BFI and the Rohauer versions). The website's URL (address) is: <www.Hitch2001.com>.

To everyone, good viewing - Ken.

LETTERS

Hitchcock's London
Gary Giblin, Indiana, USA

Hello Ken. I'm finally back from London and just wanted to share a few highlights - and 'lowlights' - with you. The bad news first - the alley where the *Frenzy* Matrimonial Agency was located has been obliterated by an office block. What a shock it was to discover that! But the delights - oh, the delights ... First, a few small ones: discovering Brenda's mews flat from *Frenzy*, and Cooper's mews flat and Mrs Gill's Georgian home from *Stage Fright*. Time has literally stood still for these London gems. Then there were the four buildings/sites that doubled as the embassy in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (56). Before the trip, I had spoken with [Hitchcock's longtime art director] Henry Bumstead and asked if he recalled exactly where the exterior was shot. Only that it was near Albert Hall, he told me, something that the daily continuity sheets suggested, but, oddly, did not specify. Well, by sheer dumb luck, I turned into the right street on my first attempt. Sadly, the building itself is gone, but the stucco terrace across the street, again, has scarcely changed since the day Hitchcock committed it to film. Perhaps the greatest joys came at the Albert Hall and the Savoy. Both extended me the utmost in courtesy and time, allowing me to prowl all over their respective floors, upper, lower and in between, to identify the spots that Hitchcock had filmed (or replicated). In the former, we were able to identify the precise spot where the embassy staff gathered in the 'corridor'; in the latter, we were able to match the view out the McKennas' third floor room to a T, even though the hotel scenes were, of course, shot in Hollywood. I also took some time to go outside London, to the Elstree Studio complex, where a plaque honoring Hitchcock is scheduled to go up very soon, and to the estate that appeared as 'Moat House' in *Easy Virtue*. I hope fans will forgive me for including these and a few other non-London locations in the book. I also included visits to English Heritage and the Westminster Archive Centre, to view reords, directories and other documents pertinent to a search for old locations; and to the BFI, to screen copies of *The Pleasure Garden* and *Downhill*, and to review scripts and pressbooks. As expected, the scripts revealed a number of items that never made it to the finished films, including the actual London address of the dentist in the first *Man Who Knew Too Much*, missing dialogue from the opening of *Rich and Strange*, and the original scene of Brodie's meeting with R in *Secret Agent* - set on a steamer! For literary buffs like yourself, I even included visits to places like Greenwich Observatory and the old Russian Embassy, both from Conrad's 'The Secret Agent'. Now, of course, it's back to the real work - finishing the manuscript ...

[Editor's note. Gary Giblin's forthcoming 'Hitchcock's London' promises to be rich in not just background and factual information about the London that Hitchcock knew - and lovingly filmed - but also packed with insights into the films and the creative mind of their director. Publisher is Daleon, New Jersey]

The Hitchcock Annual
Sidney Gottlieb, English Department, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT 06432, USA

Dear Ken. Thanks for your continuing efforts running down stories for me. I've had very good luck on abebooks.com, and am in the midst of a buying frenzy, picking up all sorts of things I've had on my wish list for years - 'Enter Sir John', 'The Farmer's Wife', etc.

Subscription information for the 'Hitchcock Annual': $12 for single copies plus postage for individuals; $10 per issue for individual subscribers (postage included within the U.S.); outside add $3 for surface mail. $25 per issue for institutions. Inquire [to the above address] about availability of back issues and offprints of individual articles. Hope you can drum up some business for us!

[Editor's note. Professor Gottlieb's email address is <spgottlieb@aol.com>. The 'Hitchcock Annual', 2001-2, is now out It includes "A Screenwriter's Forum", with participants Evan Hunter, Arthur Laurents, and Joseph Stefano; Richard Allen on "*The Lodger* and the Origins of Hitchcock's Aesthetic"; James Vest on "Hitchcock and French Criticism"; "Gus Van Sant vs Hitchcock: A *Psycho* Dossier", with contributions from Paula Marantz Cohen, Adrian Martin, Steven Jay Schneider, Sam Isshi-Gonzalès, and Constantine Verevis; and book reviews by Marshall Deutelbaum, Charles L.P. Silet, Sid Gottlieb, and others.]

Only connect?
Leslie Shepard, Co. Dublin, Irish Republic

Dear Ken. Yes - I love that anecdote about director Rex Ingram [real name: Reginald Hitchcock] telling the up-and-coming Hitchcock that he should also change his name [to make it more memorable]! My friend the film historian Liam O'Leary who died a few years ago quotes it in his biography of Ingram.

And, yes, you are right to chase up writers who don't give proper acknowledgement. I once supplied basic information on names and dates of a series of broadside ballad printers [on which Leslie is an authority - Ed.] to an individual who gave a lecture on the subject to the prestigious Bibliographical Society. After it had been applauded, I told him that my contribution should have been mentioned. He said, 'Oh, I forgot!' There are many writers who are like sponges who soak up other people's work and forget to mention it!

Meeting Pat Hitchcock
Nick Anez, Lincoln, Rhode Island, USA

After *Kaleidoscope* was rejected by Universal, I wonder why Hitchcock didn't film it cheaply on his own as he did with *Psycho*.

That reminds me of something Patricia Hitchcock told me when I met her at the Classic Film Festival in Arlington. I asked her if it was true that her father lost interest in *No Bail for the Judge* after Audrey Hepburn withdrew and why he didn't simply hire another actress as he did on other projects such as *Vertigo*. (I personally would have preferred Dana Wynter.) She admitted to being uncertain of the details but she did say emphatically that her father would never have cancelled a project he believed in because of the unavailability of an actor and that there must have been another reason, perhaps dissatisfaction with the script.

BLOOPERS

On page 27 last time, footnotes 48 and 49 were inadvertently reversed.

On page 28 last time, in 'Odd Spot', we said that Alfred and Alma Hitchcock regularly attended cinematographer Gary Graver's repertory cinema 'in San Francisco'. That should have been 'in Los Angeles'.

'ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S *ROPE*': A DIRECTOR AND HIS CAST UNCOVER RUPERT'S TRUE SEXUAL IDENTITY

By Paul Alan Fahey

> Actors love having a departure point and a basis from which to operate because the acting process is not human unless you decide who these people are and what their relationships are to one another.
>
> - Jack Shouse, Director, 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*'

This past August, the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, PCPA, a unique collaboration of students, stage professionals and community college instructors at Allan Hancock College, presented a theatrical version of the Alfred Hitchcock film classic, *Rope*. The date of the PCPA production of 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*' coincided with the fifty-third anniversary of the film's release in 1948. This event was hailed as a world premiere, and in many ways, it was.

For the first time, the artistic director emeritus, Jack Shouse, would stage the original screenplay commissioned by Hitchcock and written by Arthur Laurents. The screenplay was based on the Leopold-Loeb murder case of the 1920s and an original 1929 play by Patrick Hamilton. This production of *Rope* would offer a different interpretation of the central character, Rupert Cadell, played by Jimmy Stewart in the Hitchcock film. Mr. Shouse and his cast, in researching the screenplay and developing backstories for the play's characters, decided early on that a key factor in Rupert's past would be his affair with Brandon, the cool, mastermind of David Kentley's murder.

How a Stage Production of Alfred Hitchcock's Rope Came About

The genesis of this production occurred five years ago when Mr. Shouse viewed the film for the first time. 'I was intrigued by it after learning that Hitchcock had wanted to film [the] play, coupled with my fascination of many years regarding the Leopold-Loeb murder case ... No wonder Hitchcock selected this story for a film adaptation considering his fascination with the dark side of the human psyche ... There is not one word, one sentence, that doesn't reveal something about the characters and what their choices are, moment to moment. None of it is arbitrary; it's all there for a reason.'[1]

Mr. Shouse was fortunate to have a friend in Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell, Hitchcock's daughter, who is a board member of the PCPA Foundation. Within two years, she had managed to obtain the world premiere rights from the Patrick Hamilton estate to produce the screenplay as a theatrical play. Since the agreement between O'Connell and the estate requires that this version of 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*' be presented in a teaching environment, it is not likely to be produced in a professional theater.[2]

Background on Hitchcock's Film

Rope was the first film produced by Hitchcock's independent company, Transatlantic Pictures; it was also the Master's first film in color. Ken Mogg (1999) offers a summary of the film's plot. 'One afternoon, in an elegant upstairs New York apartment, a Harvard undergraduate named David Kentley is strangled to death with a piece of rope by two killers scarcely older than he is. They are playboy-type Brandon (John Dall) and his partner, an aspiring concert-pianist, Phillip (Farley Granger), both influenced by the "Superman" ideas of Nietzsche. They put the body in a chest. Then, to crown their demonstration of "superiority", they hold a party in the same room. Those attending include some of David's family and friends and the publisher Rupert Cadell (James Stewart) who had been Brandon and Phillip's housemaster at prep school. He knows the pair well, and has influenced their thinking. He soon feels that something is amiss, especially when at the end of the party he is handed the wrong hat and in it sees the initials "D.K." Returning shortly afterwards, he confronts the pair. There is a struggle. Then Rupert flings open the chest. Horrified, and saying that his teachings have been tragically misunderstood, he steps to the window and fires three shots into the air. Soon a police siren is heard approaching.'[3]

The Ten-Minute Takes

Rope is famous for being shot by Hitchcock in a series of ten-minute takes. In Hitchcock's words, 'I tried to give it a flowing camera movemen ... I tried to do it as if I were giving the audience all opera glasses to follow the action on the stage, but basically it was on stage.'[4] Logistically, this technique was very difficult to accomplish, as it required the

actors to learn long speeches, which caused them great anxiety about muffing their lines and thus spoiling a reel of film. This process also required Hitchcock to pre-plan an amazing amount of 'choreography.' Furniture and walls that were once there, suddenly disappeared from view as the camera continued filming and following the actors around the room. Most reports of the film's length clock it in at 80-81 minutes. Dan Auiler felt 'that Hitchcock cheated a bit on the last cut - reel nine is only five minutes long and reel ten is only two minutes long, while the other eight reels are the typical nine to eleven minutes long.'[5]

What the Critics Said About the Film

Rope, considered by many Hitchcock admirers to be one of his most important films, has generated much interest as well as conflicting criticism. Perry called it "a brave failure.'[6] John Russell Taylor found the film 'strangely flat and ponderous, all played at a uniform pace which kills most of the excitement and suspense built into the subject-matter.'[7] Arthur Laurents, the screenwriter of *Rope*, felt the series of ten-minute takes 'often looks obvious and rather crude on the screen, but the stunt was very difficult to pull off - precisely why it intrigued Hitchcock. It did add one value to telling the story: screen time is actual time.'[8] At one point in the filming, Jimmy Stewart asked Hitch 'why he was bothering to film it at all; why not just put up bleachers in the studio and sell tickets to live audiences?'[9] Lindsay Anderson called *Rope* 'a debilitated version of the Patrick Hamilton play, which abandons all the resources of cutting and lighting on the pretext of an experiment in technique.'[10]

By contrast, Robin Wood emphasized the brilliant depiction of the two central characters, Brandon and Phillip, played by John Dall and Farley Granger, and saw their ambiguous relationship 'as a working-out of suppressed homosexual tensions.'[11] Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol considered Rope one of the director's more formal works and praised Hitch for his use of color to express the characters' emotional states. They also drew parallels between Brandon, the more psychopathic and dominant of the two central characters, Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt*, and Bruno Anthony in *Strangers on a Train*.[12] Ken Mogg noted that 'the famous "ten-minute take" gives the impression that the film is one continuous shot - which becomes a metaphor for Brandon and Phillip's entrapment and lack of perspective'.[13]

Alfred Hitchcock's Rope at PCPA

I had the opportunity to see the play very near the end of its run. The actors were letter-perfect in their roles. I had recently viewed the film and remarked to my companion that the stage decoration and setting were remarkably like the film's New York penthouse apartment. Throughout the play, the lighting was used to great effect to underscore the passage of time, to focus the audience on an important prop or character in the room, to heighten the suspense and to convey emotion. There was no intermission, and the play was approximately one hour and twenty minutes, nearly the exact running time of the film.

Though I am not a theater critic nor an expert in all that is Hitchcock, I thought it was a wonderful production in all respects, and considering the audiences' positive reaction and the standing ovation the actors received at the play's end, 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*' appears to have been one of the most successful productions of the past season.

Michael Phillips reviewed the play in 'The Los Angeles Times' and gave it a moderate thumbs up. Reading between the lines, it was clear that Mr. Phillips was not a fan of the film and went on to state that 'the results aren't bad. In play form, screenwriter Arthur Laurents' *Rope* - which is what we have here, not Hitchcock's - amounts to a fairly absorbing, nicely staged exercise. If it's not riveting, well, neither was the movie.'[14]

The local press had nothing but praise for the production. Britt Fekete hailed the Arthur Laurents screenplay, the vigorous acting and called the evening 'a solid overall experience.'[15] Ryan Miller's comments focused on the set design that contained the story in an upscale apartment that seemed more cramped by the end. He also complimented the simplicity of the 1940s costume design and the lighting that directs the audience's attention as effectively as Hitchcock's camera. He ended his commentary with a final compliment to the director, Jack Shouse, and to PCPA in adapting the screenplay for the stage. 'Ultimately, however, *Rope* is an exploration of the twisted, darker side of the human mind. Brandon says the only criminal act he and Phillip can be guilty of is one of making a mistake. In adapting Hitchcock's film for stage, Shouse and PCPA are innocent of that crime.'[16]

An Interview with the Director, Jack Shouse

On October 29, 2001, I had the opportunity to sit down and chat with Jack Shouse about 'Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*'.

PF: What changes did you make in the original script?

JS: The only changes I made were based on casting realities for this production. For example, one line refers to Kenneth being mistaken for David and the line has to do with a tall, blond man. Kenneth and David were brunettes. So I just got rid of 'blond'. In the film, Mr. Kentley was played by a much older man in his seventies. The man who played him in our production was in his forties. So I got rid of some references to his being older. Only those two lines were changed, so it was basically the screenplay as a stage play.

PF: Are there hidden gay messages in the script, especially those hinting at a previous sexual relationship between Rupert and Brandon? For example, the chicken strangling.

JS: I don't know that the chicken strangling has anything to do with sexual preference. I think Brandon told Phillip to kill the chicken. In the play, Brandon makes Phillip kill David. So I think it's a power issue, and that there's a proclivity on the part of Phillip to do what he's told. This is a source of personal resentment - a self esteem issue, and he (Phillip) is remorseful from the beginning, immediately after the murder. Brandon has none of that in him. He is amoral and is clearly arrogant in a Greek-hubris kind of way. I don't think the chickens are related to homosexuality. I do think that Brandon takes delight in throwing everyone off center, off balance. He really tortures Phillip at different moments, and the chicken incident is one of them. I don't think Phillip would ever have acted on his own. He needed Brandon to control him.

PF: What changes did you make in stage direction?

JS: In the film, the camera clearly shows you what you are meant to see as an audience member, moment to moment. There's coninuous presence of a number of characters in most of the script, but you don't know what the other characters who are off camera are doing. The fun and challenge, in the play version, was to investigate the stimulus-response those other people have moment to moment because they are there on stage. Consequently, a greater three-dimensionality is possible with the characters.

PF: How did you use the lighting to help draw the audience's attention to important stage props and characters?

JS: There were certain moments I wanted to make sure were a tribute to the vision of Hitchcock and Laurents. We can use lighting to focus the audience on any part of the stage at any given time. For example, the scene with the maid, Mrs. Wilson, clearing the chest had focus on her and this activity while other conversations were going on around her but were not lit as brightly.

PF: Tell me why you think the screenplay works even better as a play.

JS: We do something before we begin a show called 'table talk'. The director and actors sit around and psychoanalyze the characters and their relationships to each other. Any play is about a given moment in time when the play begins. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. But the people have lived; they're products of their environment. So we talked a lot about the Phillip-Brandon-Rupert relationship as well as all the other characters' relationships. Actors love having a departure point and a basis from which to operate because the acting process is not human unless you decide who these people are and what their relationships are to one another. It's not about what people do. It's about why they do it. Language is only one way people communicate with each other. People will often say something based on their personal relationships and backgrounds that are in code. These unspoken agreements manifest themselves in a certain choice of language. So we decided what those moments were before the play began. We agreed Brandon definitely had sex with Rupert, and that Rupert was the dominant one in the relationship and Brandon, the submissive. In Phillip and Brandon's relationship, Brandon is the dominant person and Phillip the submissive one. We also thought Rupert and Phillip probably 'got it on' at least once. Those were common agreements. Therefore, an actor will look at each line and decide what the character wants moment to moment. Acting's really about stimulus-response. You decide what your character wants from the other characters, how they respond and what they want in return. Acting is like a tennis match. It's sending something the way you intend to send it. You take action, and the serve is returned, based on the way that other person chooses to send it, which is ultimately based on what he or she wants.

PF: To be honest, I didn't catch any of the subtle references to the Rupert-Brandon relationship when I saw the play and neither did anyone in my party. I remember asking a colleague the day after the play if she caught any hint of an affair between teacher and pupil, and she said, 'You're kidding, right?'

JS: Context and past history are agreements that have to be made if the play is to be realistic. We never underlined any of the homosexuality because that's who these characters are, given the set of circumstances. We made a number of

agreements in terms of what the intentions were behind certain lines and this was totally open to our subjective decision-making process. I also don't think we invented any. I think they are there in the script.

PF: Let's talk about some of them.

JS: Right after the murder, Phillip says that Brandon scares him as he did when he met him that first day in prep school. Phillip says he shouldn't really be talking like that, 'It's rather foolish,' and Brandon says, 'Yes it is.' We took this to imply they knew each other's story.

They talk about Rupert being 'too fastidious.' We decided that meant he's about as closeted as he can be.

Kenneth has a line about Brandon spending long nights at his master's feet. This line informed us that Kenneth knew what was going on. Brandon was out and didn't come home nights. Kenneth knew Brandon was with Rupert.

When Rupert arrives at the party, and Brandon is pouring a glass of champagne for him, Rupert says, 'You always do stutter when you're excited.' We agreed this meant Brandon's close physical proximity to Rupert was going to get him excited.

When Rupert comes back near the end of the play on the pretense of picking up his cigarette case, Brandon asks him if he'd like a drink. 'A short one?' And Rupert replies, 'No. I'd prefer a long one ... if you don't mind.'

PF: But there's no such thing.

JS: Right. The expression is a short or a tall one.

PF: Any more?

JS: Near the end of the play, Rupert asks Brandon if it's okay if he stays for the drink. 'I tought you two might be tired,' he says, and we thought it implied they might be going to bed together.

Earlier in the play when Rupert comes into the apartment and Phillip's at the piano, he tells him, 'Your touch has improved,' which totally throws Phillip off center. He's here, buckle up.

At one point Rupert is talking to Brandon about Mrs. Wilson, 'I may marry her,' and this is an opportunity for Phillip and Brandon to respond nonverbally to each other, Oh, yeah. Right!

PF: I keep going back to Arthur Laurents' autobiography. Is he the key to understanding the characters in Rope?

JS: Absolutely. His life's energy was spent with other men. The specific context and the moment of time in which he was living, in terms of secrecy and when information could be shared about homosexuality, are very important to understanding the play.

PF: There must be so much of the dialogue that is in code.

JS: Exactly. They are bright and take delight in speaking the unspoken. That's just part of the game, being in the club.

PF: Were you aware of a life-versus death theme in the screenplay and in the film?

JS: The whole point of the story is that society can not tolerate people who act on the assumption that they have the power of life and death over another person. That's Nietzche. There's a reference to Hitler in the play. Brandon says Hitler was insane, but he (Brandon) isn't. He's brighter. He's better. He's smarter. Ultimately this is a morality play that's also very Greek in which excessive ego and pride bring total destruction to the person and everyone else around him. In that sense, I think Laurents is a great playwright.

PF: On this life-death scale, where would you place the subsidiary characters such as Mr. Kentley? Where would Rupert fit in?

JS: Kentley is invited because he's David's father and that's Brandon being as wicked as he can be. I'm reminded of Melville and 'Billy Budd'. Evil can not tolerate goodness and has to act on that impulse. The other characters reveal the extent to which Brandon is manipulative and evil. And Laurents definitely thinks he's evil. Rupert does as well. Rupert's

horror and discovery is that they have acted on a philosophy, but there's a difference between philosophy and ethics. Rupert has ethics. In the end, Brandon sees Rupert as weak because he did not take action on his beliefs as Brandon had.

PF: What does the screenplay say about the recent war? Is the film too lenient or too generous to Brandon and Phillip by suggesting their crime is no worse than that of a state that sends innocent young men to fight and be killed in war?

JS: We're left at the end of the piece with Rupert saying, 'You're going to die, Brandon,' and that's about as ungenerous as you can get.

PF: What did your friend, Pat Hitchcock, think of the production and your interesting take on the Rupert-Brandon-Phillip relationship?

JS: When I talked about the project with her three years ago, I said I'd love to do it because I didn't think what was addressed in the script was in the film. Pat said I was absolutely right. I said, 'They're all gay, aren't they, Pat?' And she just laughed and said, 'Of course they are, Jack.' Pat also said for her father, it wasn't that they were murderers or that they were homosexuals. What intrigued him most was that they were both. Hitch made no value judgments about any of it. The dark side of human nature fascinated him.

I also think *Rope* is very timely. Near the play's end, Rupert says, 'You are going to die.' That mentality says people who murder and kill must be murdered and killed. And what does that mean now in our world in terms of what's going on? The most horrible moment was our first technical rehearsal, three days after September 11th. The curtains opened and revealed the skyline with two buildings that looked like the World Trade Center, but of course, they weren't. The audience was silent. As the play progressed, the thought of laughing at someone being murdered and being present in the chest was not funny, but within a week and a half, people felt they had permission to distance themselves from the immediate real-life context and enjoy the play.

A Final Word About Arthur Laurents

Jack Shouse and his cast at PCPA are not alone in their contention that Rupert is a homosexual. In his recent autobiography, 'Original Story By', Arthur Laurents is very clear about the relationships between his main characters in the screenplay. 'The three central characters in *Rope* are homosexual. Brandon and Phillip are lovers who carry the Nietzschean philosophy learned from their former prep school teacher, Rupert, to its outer limit: a murder committed to prove superiority. Rupert is a good friend and probably an ex-lover of Brandon's; his is the most interesting role.'[17] Laurents mentions that Hitchcock initially wanted Cary Grant for the role of Rupert and Montgomery Clift for Brandon along with Farley Granger for the weaker part of Phillip. Laurents thought this was 'dream casting,' but he was not surprised when Grant and Clift declined. Hitchcock told him that both actors felt uncomfortable due to their own ambiguous sexuality and their concerns about their screen images.[18]

Laurents felt the final casting of Jimmy Stewart closed all doors to completely understanding Rupert's true sexuality and his relationship to Brandon and Phillip. 'Stewart is interesting as the detective on the case but not as Rupert. That he was friends with two boys who were lovers makes no sense at all. Being gay, being any minority, is a bond, and Stewart has none in the picture except with an old maid who is literally the maid.'[19]

In a similar vein, Robin Wood, in discussing the moral and social climate of the times, noted that *Rope* could not openly mention homosexuality. 'The film is noticeably reticent on the subject of Rupert's own sexuality (he is a bachelor). If it cannot tell us explicitly that Brandon and Phillip are homosexual, it conspicuously abstains from telling us that Rupert isn't - apart from the fact that he is played by James Stewart, which of course carries its weight.'[20]

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Notes

1. 'Prelude', Summer 2001, PCPA Theaterfest playbill, p. 20. At the same time, another stage production of 'Rope', this time Patrick Hamilton's original play, opened Off-Off Broadway in New York on September 6, 2001, and closed on September 29th. The play was presented with an intermission, and Michael Criscuolo, a reviewer for nytheatre.com, felt the insertion of an intermission, intended to build and prolong the suspense, did just the opposite by interrupting the play's momentum. (www.nytheatre.com/nytheatre/rope.htm)

2. "Hitchcock Without the Camera," by Philip Brandes, 'The Los Angeles Times', Sunday, August 19, 2001.

3. 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', by Ken Mogg. (1999). Titan Books: London, p. 104.

4. "*Rear Window*, by Alfred Hitchcock". In 'Focus on Hitchcock', edited by A.J. LaValley. (1972). Prentice-Hall, Inc.: New Jersey, p. 41.

5. 'Hitchcock's Notebooks', by Dan Auiler. (1999). Avon Books, Inc.: New York, pp. 483-484.

6. 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock', by George Perry (1965). Studio Vista Limited: London, p. 99. Perry also felt 'the ten minute take did not work. It was a limiting use of the medium, and parts of the film are unbearably tedious,' p. 93.

7. 'Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock', by John Russell Taylor. (1978). Pantheon Books: New York. p. 208.

8. 'Original Story By: A Memoir of Broadway and Hollywood', by Arthur Laurents (2000). Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

9. John Russell Taylor, p. 207.

10. "Alfred Hitchcock" by Lindsay Anderson. In 'Focus on Hitchcock', p. 57.

11. "Why Should We Take Hitchcock Seriously?" by Robin Wood. In 'Focus on Hitchcock', p. 80.

12. 'Hitchcock: The First Forty-Four Films', by Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol. (1980). Frederick Ungar Publishing Company: New York, p. 73.

13. Ken Mogg, p. 104.

14. "Rope Comes Full Circle - Back to the Stage," by Michael Phillips. 'The Los Angeles Times', Wednesday, August 29, 2001.

15. "*Rope* Makes World Premiere: PCPA Production A Creepy Retelling of the Hitchcock Classic," by Britt Fekete, 'Santa Maria Times', Thursday, September 20, 2001.

16. "The Perfect Murder," by Ryan Miller. 'New Times', September 6, 2001

17. Laurents. See # 8, p. 130-131. By the time Laurents was working with Hitchcock on *Rope*, he was not only struggling to come to terms with his own sexuality, but he was having an affair and living with Farley Granger, the actor who played Phillip in the film.

18. Laurents goes on to explain that *Rope* would have been an entirely different picture with Cary and Monty in those pivotal roles. 'As compelling and fascinating as it should have been, the lesson, once again and always, was the enormous importance of casting,' p. 131.

19. Laurents, p. 131.

20. 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' by Robin Wood. (1989). Columbia University Press: New York, p. 356. Wood also implies that the film might have been quite different with Cary Grant as Rupert.

• As an interesting side note: in most of the reviews and discussions of the film, credit is given to Hume Cronyn for his adaptation of the Patrick Hamilton play. I wondered about the extent of his contributions. Laurents is unclear as well. 'I was never shown what Hume did. I suspect, since he and Hitchcock were old friends, that he was used to help work out the details of Hitchcock's innovative plan to shoot *Rope* without any conventional cutting', p. 127. P.A.F.

Best films of 2000 *and* 2001

Last issue we ran 10-best lists for 1998 and 1999, compiled by three distinguished Australian critics.

Re-capping, 1998 had no outright winner. The following films received two mentions out of a possible three: *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir), *As Good As It Gets* (James L. Brooks), *The Sweet Hereafter* (Atom Egoyan), *Welcome to Sarajevo* (Michael Winterbottom), *Primary Colors* (Mike Nichols), and *Hana-bi* (Takeshi Kitano).

By contrast, 1999 was *clearly* the year of *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick) which received three-out-of-three mentions. Runners-up with two mentions each were: *Touch of Evil* (re-release of the 1958 Orson Welles film), *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan), and *The Thin Red Line* (Terence Malick).

Which brings us to our critics' lists for 2000. For once, we had not three but four critics (and hence four lists). Those participating were Adrian Martin (film critic, author of several books on film, and film reviewer for the Melbourne 'Age'), Tom Ryan (film academic, and film critic for the 'Sunday Age', Melbourne), Fiona Vilella (Editor of 'Senses of Cinema', the Melbourne-based film website with an international following), and Evan Williams (a doyen of Australian film reviewers, writing each week in 'The Australian'). Note that in the 2000 lists, the French film *Beau Travail* receives two mentions - then receives another mention in the 2001 lists: presumably, its release-date put it on the borderline of the two years. It may, therefore, be considered to have received three 'votes'. Other films thrice-mentioned in the 2000 list: *All About My Mother* (Spain), *The Insider* (USA), and *The Straight Story* (USA). No film was mentioned four times.

2000:

Tom's list (first-release films)
1. All About My Mother (Pedro Almodovar, Spain)
2. Wonderland (Michael Winterbottom, UK)
3. Conte D'Automne (Eric Rohmer, France)
4. Mr Death: The Rise and Fall of ... (Errol Morris, USA)
5. Topsy-Tutvy (Mike Leigh, UK)
6. American Beauty (Sam Mendes, USA)
7. The Insider (Michael Mann, USA)
8. The Straight Story (David Lynch, USA)
9. The Talented Mr Ripley (Anthony Minghella, USA)
10. Titus (Julie Taymor, USA/UK)

Evan's list
1. Topsy-Turvy
2. American Beauty
3. Kikujiro (Takeshi Kitano, Japan)
4. Bringing Out the Dead (Martin Scorsese, USA)
5. Gladiator (Ridley Scott, USA)
6. The Colour of Paradise (Majid Majidi, Iran)
7. La Veuve de Saint-Pierre (Patrice Leconte, France)
8. The Road Home (Zhang Yimou, China)
9. Romance (Catherine Breillat, France)
10. Felicia's Journey (Atom Egoyan, Canada/UK)

Adrian's list ('from all sources')
1. The Shanghai Gesture (Josef von Sternberg, USA, 1941)
2. The Wind Will Carry Us (Abbas Kiarostami, Iran)
3. Beau Travail (Claire Denis, France)
4. The River (Tsai Ming-liang, Taiwan)
5. The Insider
6. All About My Mother
7. Another Day in Paradise (Larry Clark, USA)
8. Gohatto (Nagisa Oshima, Japan)
9. Mr Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr
10. The Straight Story
11. There's Something About Mary (Bobby & Peter Farrelly, USA)
12. Little Dieter Needs to Fly (Werner Herzog, Germany, 1996)

Fiona's list
1. Beau Travail
2. The Straight Story
3. Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai (Jim Jarmusch)
4. The Wind Will Carry Us
5. All About My Mother
6. Bringing Out the Dead
7. Conte D'Automne
8. Romance
9. Erin Brokervich (Steve Soderburgh, USA)
10. The Insider

(Tom Ryan's special Numb Bum Awards for the year's worst films were awarded to the following, in alphabetical order: *Groove*, *The Cider House Rules*, *Hanging Up*, *The Legend of 1900*, *Maybe Baby*, *The Muse*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, and *Stigmata*.)

2001:

We're back to three critics this time. (The editor sends hearty thanks to Evan Williams for being one of our 'founding' critics over several years.) The film that stands out here is the Belgium film *Rosetta*, mentioned by all three of our critics. Adrian Martin summed it up thus: '*Rosetta*, by the Dardenne brothers, took a modest, "realist" subject - a working-class, teenage girl (incarnated unforgettably by Emilie Dequenne) desperate to get and keep a job - and suffused

it with unparalleled physical and emotional intensity. If one mark of a great movie is that it plunges us into a total experience - no matter how disconcerting or unfamiliar that experience may be - then *Rosetta* is among the greatest of works.' The following films are mentioned twice below: *The House of Mirth* (UK) and *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (USA).

Tom's list

1. Beau Travail (Claire Denis, France)
2. Kippur (Amos Gitai, Israel/France)
3. Moulin Rouge (Bazz Luuhrmann, Australia)
4. (equal) Rosetta (Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Belgium)
4. (equal) The Gleaners and I (Agnes Varda, France)
5. Crazy (Heddy Honingmann, Holland)
6. Le Gout des Autres (Agnes Jaoui, France)
7. The Claim (Michael Winterbottom, UK)
8. Princess Mononoke (Hayao Miyazaki, Japan)
9. Amores Perros (Alejandro González Iñárritu, Mexico)
10. ABC Africa (Abbas Kiarostami, Iran)

Fiona's list

1. The House of Mirth (Terence Davies, UK)
2. A.I.: Artificial Intelligence (S. Spielberg, USA)
3. The Circle (Jafar Panahi, Iran/Italy)
4. Rosetta
5. 'R Xmas (Abel Ferrara, USA/France)
6. La Ville est Tranquille (Robert Guédiguian, France)
7. Saint-Cyr (Patricia Mazuy, France)
8. You Can Count On Me (Kenny Lonergan, USA)
9. (equal) Peppermint Candy (L. Chang-dong, Japan)
9. (equal) Platform (Jia Zhangke, Hong Kong, etc.)
10. (equal) Yi Yi (Edward Yang, Taiwan/Japan)
10. (equal) The Piano Teacher (M. Haneke, Austria)

Adrian's list

1. Rosetta
2. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Ang Lee, China, etc.)
3. The House of Mirth
4. The Exorcist: Director's Cut (William Friedkin, orig. 1973)
5. A.I.: Artificial Intelligence
6. Dr T and the Women (Robert Altman, USA)
7. Monkeybone (Henry Selick, USA)
8. The Goddess of 1967 (Clara Law, Australia)
9. Duets (Bruce Paltrow, Canada/USA)

(Adrian Martin's selection of the five worst films of the year, headed by one from Australia, is as follows: *The Monkey's Mask*, *Quills*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, *The Blair Witch Project 2*, and *Requiem For a Dream*.)

BOOK REVIEW

By Ken Mogg

DeRosa, Steven: 'Writing with Hitchcock: The Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and John Michael Hayes' (Faber and Faber, New York and London, 2001; 334 pp; pb)

Krohn, Bill: 'Hitchcock at Work' (Phaidon Press, London, 2000; 288 pp; hb)

Experience tells. Easily the most astute book on Hitchcock to appear in recent years is veteran Bill Krohn's 'Hitchcock at Work', the English version of 'Hitchcock au travail' (1999). Its only real competitor for the attention of the serious Hitchcock aficionado or scholar is the sumptuous volume 'Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences' (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2000), edited by Dominique Païni and Guy Cogeval. Below those books I would rank two from Faber: Peter Conrad's 'The Hitchcock Murders' (2000) and Steven DeRosa's 'Writing with Hitchcock; also the collection called 'Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays' (1999), edited for the BFI by Richard Allen and S. Ishii-Gonzalès. For purposes of the present review, I intend to focus on just two of these books: those by Krohn and DeRosa.

Bill Krohn has been Hollywood correspondent for 'Cahiers du Cinéma' since 1978; he also helped assemble (with Richard Wilson and Myron Meisel) *It's All True* (1993), resurrecting much of the 'lost' footage of the abandoned three-part documentary that Orson Welles was shooting in Brazil in 1942 while, back in Hollywood, RKO were hacking up *The Magnificent Ambersons*. In short, Krohn knows the ins and outs of Hollywood better than most, something to which he brings a cultured eye (he has an Arts background) and vigorous writing skills. His 'Hitchcock au travail' understandably won an award for the best large-format film book of its year.

Steven DeRosa is considerably younger than Krohn, and it shows. Nonetheless, he too holds university degrees (in Art and Media Studies), and appears to be familiar with the film industry from the inside, being a 'screenwriter and film archivist' (to quote the somewhat guarded blurb on the back cover of his book). As for his writing skills in general, they are evident enough - if, at this stage, less supple and trenchant than Krohn's. I also think, to put it politely, that DeRosa still has a few of the finer points of scholarship to learn. My review is both about scholarship and an attempt to expound some of the findings and key ideas of these two books.

* * *

Perhaps the best chapter in Krohn is the one called "Reinventing a Classic: *The Man Who Knew Too Much*" which, *inter alia*, makes this excellent scholar's point (pp. 160-61):

> According to Leonard Leff ['Hitchcock and Selznick', 1987, p. 192] it was [Angus] MacPhail who, many years before, had given Hitchcock the word 'MacGuffin', used to designate whatever the characters in a thriller are chasing after. The word comes from a joke about a device called a MacGuffin for hunting lions in Scotland, where there are no lions - the moral being that the essence of the MacGuffin is to be nothing. Who better than MacPhail, then, [in a memo to Hitchcock] to have renamed the Killer (although the name the character bears in the script is never spoken and remained a joke between the collaborators): 'Rien'.

Krohn is referring, of course, to the would-be assassin played with splendid menace by Continental actor Reggie Nalder. Note Krohn's careful attribution of the character's name-change to Angus MacPhail, the sourcing of the information about the MacGuffin to Leonard Leff,[1] and the modifying parenthesis. As I say, Krohn is the complete scholar.

Not so, DeRosa! He makes roughly the same point as Krohn, thus (p. 269): 'It is later revealed that this man is the assassin, whose name in the script is Rien, which is apt since "*rien*" is the French word for "nothing" and the whole business of the assassination is the film's MacGuffin.' Yet DeRosa both fudges who should get the credit for altering the character's name and neglects to mention that anyway the point had already been made a year or two earlier by Krohn. Sadly, this instance of DeRosa's 'scholarship' is all too typical, as we'll see.

I'll try to be scrupulously fair about this. The reader should know that MacPhail was invited by his old friend, Hitchcock, to write the initial rough treatment for a remake of Hitchcock's 1934 classic, the original *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, after it became apparent that screenwriter Hayes would be unavailable for some weeks finishing *The Captain's Table* (which was eventually scrapped anyway - the film of Richard Gordon's hearty novel was finally made in England two years later, by Rank). As a result, Paramount put MacPhail on an eight-week guarantee (DeRosa, p. 155), and he and Hitchcock started work together at the end of January, 1955. Now let me quote from Dan Auiler's 'Hitchcock's Notebooks' (US edition, 1999, p. 176): 'The script [of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*] would eventually be penned by John Michael Hayes, but the principal construction took place during February with Angus MacPhail.' On the evidence of 'Notebooks' (pp. 176-97), that claim is incontrovertible - and in fact neither Krohn (especially) nor DeRosa says otherwise. Nonetheless, towards the end of the film's production, Hayes appealed to the Writers' Guild of America to stop MacPhail from receiving *any* screenplay credit - and was successful. (I am told that the WGA is notorious for many poor rulings in cases like this.)[2]

No doubt out of loyalty to Hayes, who provided in interviews much of the material for 'Writing with Hitchcock', DeRosa is as diplomatic as possible about this whole sorry business. Apparently a prolonged bout of neuralgia in March 1955 prevented MacPhail from making a substantial contribution to the three-way script conferences held between himself, Hitchcock and Hayes after the latter came on board; and for the same reason MacPhail never actually wrote out the treatment (as opposed to many pages of astute and even brilliant notes) for which he had been officially hired. DeRosa can reasonably conclude (p. 201): 'Had MacPhail written the treatment as he was hired to, he might have earned an "Adaptation by" credit and might even have been entitled to share in the screenplay credit ... [In the event,] the credit arbitration committee [could] reach but one conclusion: that Angus MacPhail contributed to the construction of the screenplay, but that the screenplay was [exclusively] that of John Michael Hayes.'

Morally, I have little quarrel with DeRosa's presentation of this particular matter. If Bill Krohn brings a keener *aesthetic* eye to the relative contributions made by MacPhail and Hayes to *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, that is a separate issue - to which I now turn. I will need to quote from Krohn at this point. He notes that it took Hayes less than a month to present Hitchcock with an incomplete first draft titled 'Into Thin Air' (the likely connection with the notion of the MacGuffin is something that neither Krohn *nor* DeRosa comments on!).[3] He then observes (p. 161):

> To say that Hayes fleshed out the characters would be to slight his contribution. Up until this point there were no characters, only an increasingly refined structure for provoking suspense worked out by a couple of veteran plot wizards. Hayes brought Ben, Jo and Hank to life ...

Having said that, Krohn can point to the other side of the coin. Noting that some of Hayes's best ideas, such as the McKennas' family quarrels, tend in the script to be too melodramatic, Krohn describes how Hitchcock directed these scenes in such a way that their point was deliberately thrust to the periphery. Krohn's conclusion (p. 162) is more sophisticated than anything DeRosa manages:

> Indeed, before [Hitchcock and Hayes's] break - which was provoked by Hayes's decision that 'as a matter of principle, and even of my career' he deserved sole screenplay credit, and his success at getting the Writers Guild to give it to him - Hitchcock might very well have applied to Hayes his remark to Truffaut about Evan Hunter, the screenwriter of *The Birds*: 'He's a real professional, but he doesn't have the obliqueness of Hitchcock.'[4]

* * *

Here are other instances of the differences in 'scholarship' shown by the two books under review. I see no need to apologise for the fact that, in each case, I have a personal interest in the matter. I pass on my insights for what they're worth.

In 1996 I published on the World Wide Web my article "Out of Hitchcock's Filing Cabinet", revised from a paper delivered at the Melbourne Film Festival in 1988. (In the interim it was also published in the Australian journal 'Film Views'.) The article is still on the Web where, soon after it appeared, Steven DeRosa assuredly read it, as he and I often at that time corresponded by email and exchanged links for our respective websites. Among the matters considered in the article is where Hitchcock and Hayes may have got the idea (not found in the original film) for Jo's song at the embassy in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* that enables the McKennas to locate their kidnapped son. From an excellent 1973 monograph, 'Melodrama', by James L. Smith, in which 'happy endings' typical of 19th-century stage melodrama are enumerated, I quoted this gem (p. 36):

> Lost children adopted by wealthy foster parents can be easily located by singing their favourite carol in the snowy street below.

If this wasn't a likely source for the ending contrived by Hayes and Hitchcock for their film, I couldn't at the time think of another or a better. Hitchcock, I told myself, may have long ago attended a play with just such an ending.[5] So up on the Web went the quote. Some time later, friend and film critic Philip Kemp in London read my article in hardcopy and got in touch. There was, he said, another possible source for the idea. And then I learnt (or learnt again - it did sound familiar) the legend of how Richard I, known as Richard the Lionheart, returning from the Crusades, had been imprisoned by the King of Austria but was eventually rescued by his favourite troubador who went from castle to castle singing a song that had been composed by his master. When Richard heard the song, he joined in the refrain, thus signalling his whereabouts. Promptly I added this piece of information to the article on the Web, with the comment that Hitchcock (to judge from an audio-tape in my possession)[6] must have once puzzled a group of USC students when he told them that the ruse of the song was taken from Shakespeare's 'Richard III'! (He certainly puzzled *me* for a long time with his remark!)

When Bill Krohn's 'Hitchcock at Work' came out, I was doubly gratified to read there (p. 158) a reference to the legend of Richard I and his troubador. Firstly, I was gratified because clearly Philip Kemp had been right: Krohn cites a memo from Hitchcock to Paramount which mentions how Angus MacPhail had suggested adapting the legend to their film.[7] Secondly, I was gratified to find Krohn referring to Hitchcock's talk at USC (Hitchcock, wrote Krohn, 'was mixing up one of England's most infamous villains with one of its greatest heroes'). A footnote (p. 287) cited the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website.

Later, I read DeRosa's book and this time had less reason to be gratified. The Richard I legend is described, yes (pp. 156-57), but there's no specific attribution of its use in the film to Angus MacPhail - Hitchcock's memo to Paramount goes unmentioned. Indeed, you might suppose that DeRosa didn't know of the memo, given a footnote (p. 313) which simply says: 'I am grateful to Bob Dell [from Pace University] for pointing this [the Richard I parallel] out to me.' As I say, no mention of Hitchcock's memo, nor, for that matter, of either the 'MacGuffin' website or Bill Krohn's book (which, remember, had preceded DeRosa's by easily a year).

Which may raise a further matter of some personal concern to me. In 1998 my octogenarian friend Leslie Shepard in Dublin wrote to me concerning Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (based on a story by Cornell Woolrich). Leslie had been an associate of noted film historian, the late Liam O'Leary. 'Do you know the H.G. Wells short story "Through a Window"?', Leslie asked. (I didn't.) Whereupon he proceeded to quote from memory the story's opening lines about a man sitting by his window overlooking the Thames, with his broken legs encased in plaster. By the time the story is finished, several other striking anticipations of the film *Rear Window* have occurred - suggesting to me (a) that Cornell Woolrich's 'Rear Window' took its inspiration from Wells, and (b) that Hitchcock, who had known Wells personally, had probably read the Wells story too and possibly been influenced by it when he decided to make his 1954 film. Some of this I wrote up in my book on Hitchcock (pp. 129-30) and had in fact discussed with Steven DeRosa beforehand (Steven wrote the excellent short survey of "Hitchcock and His Writers" for my book). Not surprisingly, then, the matter of the Wells story and its likely influence on Woolrich and/or Hitchcock turns up in 'Writing with Hitchcock', where it is mentioned more than once (e.g., pp. 13-14, 313) - but never with acknowledgment to either me (or my book) or Leslie Shepard ... At the very least, Steven old chap, your policy on acknowledgments seems inconsistent. If you thank Bob Dell (and no-one else) for pointing out to you the significance apropos Hitchcock of the legend of Richard I and his troubador, you should surely also thank either Ken Mogg or Leslie Shepard for tipping you off about the significance apropos Hitchcock of the H.G. Wells story called 'Through a Window'.

On this matter of 'scholarship', I need to give some further instances. Among my favourite Hitchcocks, and one of the four scripted by John Michael Hayes (sticking closely to the joyous short novel by Jack Trevor Story), is *The Trouble With Harry*. Apart from the moment near the end when the myopic Doctor stumbles from Jennifer's house, exclaiming, 'This is the first nightmare I've had in 25 years' - a moment more suited to radio comedy than an effective sight-gag - I find the film immaculate. That it's also a substantial one I tried to show in my essay first published in 'MacGuffin' #21, and then on the Web, called "The universal Hitchcock". The essay's argument, drawing on object-relations theory, that Harry is the film's MacGuffin, relates Harry to shared guilt derived from an infant's dependent relation on its mother. Interestingly, Robert Samuels's book, 'Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality' (1998, p. 63), makes very similar claims about the MacGuffin, using a Lacanian approach. In simpler terms, you could probably say that Harry represents Original Sin.[8]

DeRosa, too, analyses Hitchcock's film in his book, whose final chapter of 60 pages is called "The Screenplays - An Analysis". I'll make some general comments on that chapter in a moment; for now, my main concern, as I say, is with DeRosa's 'scholarship'. Again I happen to know that Steven read my essay on *Harry*: for a while, we had an enjoyable exchange of emails about the film, and Steven spoke of his pleasure at several times meeting with Hayes and of visiting locales where the film was shot. On one occasion he reported that he had just come from the site of the 'Wiggs Emporium' where he had seen the living image of 'Mrs Wiggs' herself! But I digress. I also recall Steven congratulating me for the point made in my essay about Jack Trevor Story's tramp who is heard 'mumbling something from Virgil'. 'No doubt the *Eclogues*', I had surmised, thinking of both works' Arcadian bent. 'Or the *Bucolics*', Steven had suggested. Well, the point ended up in DeRosa's book (p. 134) but it was now his alone. No mention of 'The MacGuffin' or its website (nor even of Bob Dell)!

Worse, DeRosa's analysis of the film makes particular play (pp. 262-63) with the film's theme of 'going home' and of how Harry himself returns to, and is associated with, Mother Earth. This was a leading theme of my essay, but, I'm sorry to report, that essay is *never* mentioned in DeRosa's book. On the other hand, the reader is told (p. 255) that Ed Sikov's essay on *Harry* in his 'Laughing Hysterically' (1994) is 'excellent' - though about the only overt use of it by DeRosa concerns Sikov's dubious reference to Deuteronomy (one of the books of Moses in the Old Testament) to explain why Harry ends up without shoes.[9] In any event, such a reference is surely much less pertinent to Hitchcock's film than to Story's novel, given that the possibly Jewish name of Harry's (and Jennifer's) son, 'Abie', was changed by the filmmakers to 'Arnie' ...[10]

* * *

Of course, everyone is fallible, and from reading DeRosa's book I finally learnt about a couple of errors in mine. When 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' came out, Steven (quite rightly) qualified his congratulations on it by saying to me that he had spotted slips. When I asked him what they were, he didn't reply. Well, as I say, I now know a couple of them. Trustingly, I had followed Doris Day's biography by A.E. Hotchner (Bantam edition, 1976, p. 193) in which Doris is quoted as saying that the difficult scene in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* where Ben sedates Jo before telling her that their son has been kidnapped was done in just one take. But in fact DeRosa's research showed him that Scenes 146A and 147E - the relevant ones - were shot eleven and ten times each, until Hitch was satisfied (DeRosa, p. 195).[11]

Also, I wrote of *To Catch a Thief* in my book that Hitchcock had planned to open the film with a Mardi Gras parade in Nice (doubtless designed to announce the film's twin themes of 'masquerade' and 'life' - not dissimilar to those of *Harry*)[12] but had been prevented from doing so by a prolonged wet spell. DeRosa, though, found out that for budgetry

reasons, 'Hitchcock decided to drop the sequence more than a month before arriving in the South of France' (p. 307). The excuse of bad weather was probably just a publicist's fib.

Further, apropos DeRosa's chapter called "The Screenplays - An Analysis", I'm grateful to him for succinct observations like this list of what makes a shooting script Hitchcockian: 'the subjective camera technique, long sequences without dialogue, suspenseful set pieces, and the ironic use of framing and transition'. (p. 266)[13] All of these things DeRosa finds in Hayes's screenplay for *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and the chapter offers several such medium-level insights into the craft of both screenwriting and cinematic storytelling generally. On the other hand, it seldom pushes further. Robie's 'arc' as a character in *To Catch a Thief* develops late, we're told (p. 237), when he finally 'admits and accepts his dependence on others, particularly Francie'. Though DeRosa adds that Robie, even then, needs prompting, leading 'the reader and viewer to suspect he hasn't changed all that much, like Lisa at the end of *Rear Window*',[14] there is no matching analysis of *Francie's* development as a character. After having been a spoilt, wilful young woman for whom 'words [were] just playthings',[15] Francie claims to have suddenly matured. Yet the last scene contrives to suggest that in fact her wilful nature remains unchanged, and barely concealed.[16] That is, she, too, is a very *Hitchcockian* character.

At the start of 'Writing with Hitchcock', the author suggests how certain traits of Hayes's screenplays for Hitchcock constitute their writer's special contribution. In particular, DeRosa singles out Stella in *Rear Window* as a blunt, earthy, straight-talking woman who 'is truly a Hayes character ... found over and over again in his work' (pp. 22-24). Up to a point, this may be true: we're told (p. 24) that the mother in *Torch Song* (1953) is the first such Hayes character, one also found in *To Catch a Thief* (Mrs Stevens), *The Trouble With Harry* (Mrs Wiggs), *Butterfield 8*, *Where Love Has Gone*, et al. Yet the evidence isn't wholly convincing. For a start, DeRosa himself notes (p. 41) that the role of Stella is 'almost a reprise of [Ritter's] previous appearances in Mitchell Leisen's *The Mating Season* [1951] and George Cukor's *The Model and the Marriage Broker* [1951]'. Is DeRosa implying that, in this matter, Hayes is just mimicking other writers? Then again, didn't Hitchcock's films already contain at least a variant of such a character? I'm thinking of the straight-talking *young* women in such films as *Young and Innocent*, *Shadow of a Doubt* (Charlie's sister, Ann) and *Strangers on a Train* (the Pat Hitchcock character)?

In any case, in 'MacGuffin' #24 (February 1998) I tried to show that the Stella character is something of an *archetype* - thus, in a sense, not created by any particular writer but *utilised* by writers such as Hayes. To illustrate my point, I noted how very similar to *Rear Window* in several respects (to the extent that it may have been a direct influence) is the crime novel 'The Daughter of Time' (1951) by Josephine Tey, whose 'A Shilling for Candles' had been filmed by Hitchcock as *Young and Innocent*. Among the similarities: a man laid up in bed or in a wheelchair after an accident; the man's boredom that leads him to solve a crime; a thick-skinned, straight-talking visitor, a middle-aged woman, who acts as the man's sounding-board and the story's Chorus (in 'The Daughter of Time' she is a charlady named Mrs Tinker); a fiancée who is a professional model or actress and who teams up with the older woman to help their mutual charge, i.e., the man, investigate the crime he seems to have unearthed ...[17] Steven DeRosa read my article in 'The MacGuffin' (he told me) but chose to ignore the way it must surely modify any claim that blunt, straight-talking female characters are an invention or prerogative of John Michael Hayes.

I now come back to DeRosa's chapter "The Screenplays - An Analysis" to give one more instance of what I can only call a shallowness. If DeRosa had really grasped the beauty of Hayes's treatment of the 'going home' (to Mother) theme in *The Trouble With Harry*, and the choice of Shakespeare's 116th sonnet ('Love's not Time's fool') for Doctor Greenbow to quote,[18] he would have noted how grimly honest it is that the film finally allows that the womb and then the tomb are the *only* two places where 'eternity' (timelessness) may be found - or anyway is simulated or parodied.[19] In other words, he would have noted the foreshadowing of major themes of *Vertigo*, including that film's profoundly sardonic opposition of illusion and reality. Between the womb (a state of not knowing, or not *yet* knowing) and the tomb (a state of *non*-knowing or just *nothing*) is the world, in which *degrees* of knowing are always present. Norman O. Brown, in 'Life Against Death' (Sphere Books, 1968, p. 34), defined 'the basic theme of the universal history of mankind' as simply the 'infantile conflict between actual impotence and dreams of omnipotenece' - which I take to be also the central theme of *Vertigo*[20] and which is another way of describing the essential restlessness that knowledge brings. (Given its title, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* should be included in the sequence of films I'm describing here, as should *The Wrong Man*, which is ultimately about 'something the characters can't comprehend ... that concerns the whole time/space/causality nexus of our understanding'.)[21]

But DeRosa draws no such connections. Nor does he emphasise the connection between love and a sense of eternity (a connection which another great English poet, Andrew Marvell, would mock as an illusion)[22] and the attempts by any number of Hitchcock characters, especially the villains, to attain such a *rarefied* or *transcendent* state in other ways, thereby parodying 'true love'. Such characters include Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt* (where the visual motif of waltzing couples may be shown to represent his yearning to return to the womb and its innocence), Doctor Murchison in *Spellbound* (who wants to stay director of the significantly-named 'Green Manors' *forever*), Brandon in *Rope* (whose

mock-Nietzschean sentiments the film suggests are anti-life, and who thinks that to commit a perfect murder would raise him to the status of artist), the tragic Scottie in *Vertigo* (who seemingly nearly breaks out of his metaphysical void to find a 'lasting' love), and Norman in *Psycho* (whose devotion to 'Mother' represents the ultimate narcissism).[23]

When the bookish Dr Greenbow in *The Trouble With Harry* complains that 'this is the first nightmare I've had in 25 years', Hitchcock is mocking the false sense of 'eternity' that the Doctor's retreat from reality has given him. ('I wouldn't like to be operated on by Dr Greenbow', Sam murmurs significantly.) But such a retreat reminds us of the false 'Arcadia' in which the film's main characters have also immured themselves, until on the 'magical' day of Harry's death (even a MacGuffin has a function!) they all 'grow up' to a new sense of responsibility and limited, but gratifying, freedom. (Jennifer has her doubts about this, of course, but Sam tells her 'easy come, easy go' - which may well be the only sensible attitude to hold!) And Sam, the 'genius', may himself soon find his art taking on a new dimension and 'edge', you feel.

As I say, little of the *film's* dimensionality or edge is evoked by DeRosa, whose analysis falls back on formulaic observations about the characters' 'act of confessing' (p. 250ff) - the sort of thing that 'Cahiers' man Krohn probably heard in kindergarten! If that sounds, well, cruel, and maybe the author is addressing a new generation of readers for whom little of the book's content will be old hat, then so be it. I have already indicated that he writes well, in a teacherly sort of way, and am simply trying to 'place' his book with the readership it warrants. That readership isn't the general public - the book's content is somewhat esoteric, especially in its last third - but nor is it exactly required reading for all Hitchcock aficionados. Rather, it may interest the not-too-demanding general film buff and also win a deserved place on college bookshelves where screenwriting and/or Hitchcock courses are offered.

* * *

A thesis of Krohn's remarkable 'Hitchcock at Work' is that, contrary to a prevailing myth (part-fostered by Hitchcock himself), the director was not averse to improvisation during production, and accordingly many of his best scenes and effects were arrived at then. A couple of quotes may give the general idea. First, Hitchcock himself (p. 12): 'In my mind [it's about] ninety per cent worked out [beforehand].' And, second, Krohn on *Notorious* (p. 88): [Several] details were added during production. The shooting thus became the next draft of the movie, rather than the reproduction of a plan already worked out on paper.'

The book deals mainly with Hitchcock's work in Hollywood, but his willingness to experiment outside of the script was apparent during the Silent Era. Krohn gives several instances, the most striking (p. 22) being that of *Downhill* (1927). At one London cinema, the film would stop for a few minutes while Ivor Novello, its star, performed onstage the next scene - anticipating, Krohn tells us, both the sound film and 3D![24] (He might have noted further that this 'avant-garde' experiment had a thematic point: *Downhill* questions the very nature of reality and shows it to be a matter of worlds within worlds.[25] Novello's 'entr'acte' constitutes one more such world, one dependent for its significance on the film around it - a neat reversal of how a film is normally thought contingent on the 'real' world.)

With *Saboteur* (1942), Hitchcock was again happy to improvise when necessary. For example, humorist Dorothy Parker's 'additional dialogue' included colourful lines for the chirpy truck driver who gives Barry Kane a lift; noting how engaging a character the driver had become, 'Hitchcock decided to bring him back for an unscripted encore' (p. 43). This was the scene on the bridge where the driver helps Barry elude the police, an escape whose details were themselves left to the editing room for a final decision (after two different versions were shot).

Again, to return to *Notorious*, that film's first scene was written and originally filmed from Alicia's point of view inside the courtroom. But at some stage during production Hitchcock wrote in a memo that the scene wouldn't 'go over' (p. 94) unless it emphasised the photographers outside the courtroom (presumably they help establish the idea of Alicia's 'notoriety')[26], and so it was re-staged and re-shot.

Rear Window likewise benefitted from Hitchcock's readiness to depart from the shooting script, and to experiment with camera movements, angles, etc. (pp. 143-45). Another film where Hitchcock improvised was *Marnie* (1964). Deftly, Krohn first notes several shots whose unscripted choice of angle conceals Marnie's face, then observes how these all fit with the scripted shot of Marnie walking away from the camera with which the film begins. He concludes (p. 266):

> This was a choice [Hitchcock] made not because Hedren would have been unable to play the scene (apparently she was capable of playing anything he asked, except cries of terror), nor because Marnie, or women in general, are a 'mystery', but for a technical reason: because the director who had spent his life filming his actors so that we can read the thoughts on their faces had understood that there are thoughts which cannot be photographed.

This rings true: Krohn has understood the film beautifully. (Of course, *Marnie* is also replete with shots of a different kind - what might be called the in-your-face kind. But in fact these complement the other shots, being reminders of the banality of everyday life on which the loveless Marnie would turn her back, as she has largely turned her back on us ...)

My parenthesis just now, and another slightly earlier (on *Downhill*), both complement and confirm one or other of Krohn's findings. It is a beauty of his book that, time and again, I found myself able to do this - it didn't happen with DeRosa's book. Krohn's perceptions of individual films are intuitive in the best sense, using archived and other material as a departure-point to winkle out creative decisions that give the films their dynamics, not just their formal structures or themes. In short, Krohn gets closer than other writers to Hitchcock's *mind* 'at work', and stimulates the reader in ways that film-writing, I dare say, ideally always should.

One learns on p. 42 that *Saboteur*'s chief villain, Tobin (Otto Kruger), 'represents the "America Firsters", *isolationists* [my emphasis] whom Hitchcock characterized to Truffaut as "American fascists", a theme that acquired a new inflection when, on 12 December, he brought in the very left-wing Dorothy Parker ...' Several of her screenplay's 'anti-establishment zingers' eventually caught the attention of the Production Code office, such as the line given to the heroine's uncle - himself an 'isolationist' of a different sort, a hermit - about how the duty of a citizen may 'sometimes involve disregarding the law' (p. 43). Here I immediately thought of the scene in Ford's/Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) where some of the labour-camp workers, whose complaints have been ignored by corrupt officials, take the law into their own hands to deal with paid trouble-makers.[27] But it was Krohn's use of the word 'isolationists' that ultimately resonated with me. I had previously noted (in my book, p. 83) how *Saboteur*'s early scenes 'tend to show a disunited country whose citizens are restless or lonely'. Now I saw how, anticipating *Lifeboat*, the film opposes one (inadvertent) type of 'isolationist' - the disorganised good guys - to another, the scheming villain who wants to keep things as they are in order to further his own ends. But at the film's climax, by means of melodrama, Hitchcock gives us a *sense* of disunity overcome.[28] Importantly, this theme would became almost standard in his films (e.g., *Under Capricorn*, *Rear Window*), albeit usually inflected towards ambiguity and 'open-ended pessimism'. The theme, with its inflections, typically makes such films seem very satisfying when viewed today. (Steven DeRosa quotes approvingly [p. xii] the suggestion by Thomas M. Leitch that 'a singular theme is at the heart of each of the Hitchcock-Hayes films: the individual becoming one with his community'. But obviously I'm not sure that isn't also true of other Hitchcock films such as *Saboteur* - nor, incidentally, that it's necessarily a mark of a film's superiority.)

Another paragraph by Krohn, on *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), that I found both insightful and stimulating, begins by noting how Sally Benson's and Alma Reville's rewrite of Thornton Wilder's script fleshed out the children Ann and Roger 'by giving them their own monomanias to match Herb and Joe, whose conversations [now] became overtly homicidal' (p. 63).[29] Succinctly, the paragraph lists further script changes. Then it concludes: '[Benson and Reville added] the story of Uncle Charlie's mysterious childhood accident, while cutting a line in the great monologue Wilder wrote for Cotten about "fat, greedy women" which made obvious what we suspect anyway: that Charles is a gigolo driven by self-loathing to kill his wealthy clients.' Again and again Krohn's book shows Hitchcock cutting out overt explanation of character, thereby illustrating something Norman Lloyd has written, that Hitchcock liked to leave audiences a bit puzzled.[30]

But the suggestion that Uncle Charlie is a gigolo 'driven by self-loathing' rang several bells for me. The analogy with serial-killer Earle Nelson, who was part-inspiration for the character played by Joseph Cotten,[31] now became clearer: Nelson went on a murdering spree across the United States in 1926 and 1927, killing mainly landladies, and seems to have been a religious zealot (who thought his face was like Christ's) as if to distract himself from the shame and self-loathing he felt deep down. But of course the resemblance to the character played by Ivor Novello in *The Lodger* (1926) is also striking. I have always thought that Novello's character, as hinted at by a flashback that only *seems* to exonerate him of murder, may actually have killed his sister at her coming-out ball (i.e., she's another adolescent on the verge of becoming a sexual being, like young Charlie in *Shadow*), then taken to slaying a succession of look-alikes of his sister as if to justify his original act by projecting the guilt onto these hapless blondes. So he calls himself 'The Avenger'. Meanwhile, he too is shown to be driven by religious fervour, at one point being photographed with the shadow of a cross on his face.

Further, there's a link to the other Ivor Novello character in Hitchcock's work: the wrongfully expelled schoolboy Roddy in *Downhill* (1927). From the halcyon world of youth Roddy is suddenly plunged, like Manny in *The Wrong Man* (1956), into a harsher, 'real' world where mortality and criminality are rife. After being relieved of his inheritance by a two-timing actress to whom he is briefly married (in these early films, women are nominally blamed, like the Biblical Eve, for most of men's calamities),[32] he is forced to take work as a gigolo in a Paris 'music hall'. This establishment is run by another woman, 'Madame, La Patronne, expert in human nature'. But soon Roddy quits in disgust and self-loathing, and we may sense a rough parallel between this unmotherly Madame and the 'merry widows' on whom the vengeful Uncle Charlie preys ...

Still in line with Krohn's main thesis, another instance of his stimulating insights concerns the many alternate takes for *Rear Window*. (His analysis here, on pp. 144-46, is again excellent where, you feel, DeRosa's would have been humdrum. The former is probably closer to the perceptive writing found in Leonard Leff's 'Hitchcock and Selznick' - but sharper, and without resort to rhetoric.) Especially good is the passage describing how the two opening pans around the courtyard came to be in the film, and how they ended up merged in a way that 'shows the courtyard dead and then suddenly alive, as if a second curtain had gone up ...' Is this, then, another instance of worlds-within-worlds? Certainly Krohn's opposition of 'dead' and 'alive' fits the way the film first associates Jeff's freedom to travel the world for 'Life' magazine with one kind of being 'alive', then subtly calls the notion in question while keeping a degree of ambiguity. Is Lisa (whose name, and indeed the soundtrack, links her to the Mona Lisa) a force for life - or death? Is she Jeff's good anima-figure who will lead him to a deeper self-realisation, or is she his nemesis? In this regard, it's fascinating to note with Krohn (p. 277) how J.M. Barrie's 'Mary Rose' (1919), a touchstone work for understanding Hitchcock, has as a theme the mother who may do her son an injury. Such a theme is surely present in *Strangers on a Train* and *Psycho*, for example. And given the emphasis in the second half of *Rear Window* on Lisa's emerging femininity, to the point where, in her simple floral dress, she finally *cradles* Jeff's head in her hands, is the theme not also present there? That is, has she not 'castrated' him by taking away his individuality (his job as a roving cameraman), while thereby doing the world's 'Will' - of which Schopenhauer was so suspicious?[33] And, apropos worlds-within-worlds, is what we see of the New York courtyard in *Rear Window* somehow representative of 'real life'? Or do its various stories and quests amount to *no more than* an illusion and a dream (as the soundtrack again is instrumental in suggesting)?[34]

Of course, perhaps the *most* dream-like of Hitchcock's films is *Vertigo*. Krohn suggests (pp. 186-87) that Angus MacPhail played a crucial role here. Hitchcock had planned to have MacPhail and Maxwell Anderson write the *Vertigo* screenplay, as they had worked separately and effectively on *The Wrong Man*. Accordingly, while waiting for Anderson to produce his first draft, Hitchcock assigned MacPhail to preliminary work on another project, *Flamingo Feather*. Krohn succinctly describes Laurens van der Post's adventure story as 'set in South Africa and built around an African tribe's myth of a recurring dream with apocalyptic implications'. Sadly, MacPhail had taken to drink - not for the first time[35] - and now withdrew himself from all projects. Nonetheless a two-page outline exists in Hitchcock's handwriting, but filed under 'MacPhail', of a new, freer adaptation of 'D'entre les Morts'. It is this which became the basis of *Vertigo*'s next draft. And now the film-to-be had for the first time the structure of a recurring nightmare. Krohn understandably deduces MacPhail's influence. He cites the latter's awareness of mythology, and how MacPhail had recently said, for example, that 'the essence of Buchan, Haggard and others is the theme of the romantic, poetic quest, which goes right back to the Odyssey'.

Well, *Vertigo* has a scene set in the Argosy Book Store.[36] And 'Flamingo Feather' was described by one reviewer as a cross between (Haggard's) 'King Solomon's Mines' and (Buchan's) 'Prester John'. So I, for one, not only see what Krohn and MacPhail are getting at but have myself written a practically identical observation to MacPhail's in an article on *North by Northwest*.[37] (For his part, Krohn says on p. 187 that MacPhail's comment is indeed more relevant to *North by Northwest*.) Also, several of Krohn's points about *Vertigo* almost eerily match ones of mine, and vice versa. For example, after noting (p. 155) the Keatsian strain in Maxwell Anderson's 'unusable' title, *Darkling, I Listen*, and what it signals about Anderson's attempt to adapt Boileau and Narcejac's novel as faithfully as possible, Krohn links both novel and film to Gnosticism. I had suggested something similar in my essay "The Fragments of the Mirror" ('MacGuffin' #25) where I noted the novel's allusion to a fictional film title, *Jacob Boehme*. The mystic Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) was in several ways a Gnostic. The scholar H. Popper wrote of him: 'Feeling that God was far away, he saw around him a world in which evil flourished, which contained both "*good and evil*, love and anger ... and that it went *well* in this world for the wicked as with the virtuous".'[38] But by resolving '"to wrestle with the love and the mercy of God", as Jacob in the Bible had wrestled with the angel of God', Boehme came to experience, as he had half-foreseen, a 'breaking through "the gates of hell, even into the innermost birth and geniture of the Deity"'. Krohn's definition of Gnosticism (p. 185) is very close to this: 'an ancient religion which preaches that the created universe is a mistake and aims at reunion with the True God, who lives at an infinite distance from it'.

Keats's line, 'Darkling I listen', from 'Ode to a Nightingale', is clearly relevant here. ('Darkling' means 'in the dark'.) So too are the poem's references to being 'half in love with easeful Death' and 'ceas[ing] upon the midnight with no pain', not to mention its concluding couplet:

> Was it a vision or a waking dream?
> Fled is that music: - Do I wake or sleep?

Most of these matters have been considered in previous issues of 'The MacGuffin' dealing with, for example, *Suspicion*, and with the episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' called "No Pain".[39] I shan't labour them further. I only want to observe that, apart from the Gnostic and Orphic strain in 'D'entre les Morts' and a possible influence of Cocteau's film

Orphée (1950), as noted by Krohn (p. 185), an *English* literary tradition is equally potent apropos *Vertigo*. Fairly obviously, this starts with Keats's poem itself - one of the most influential and most cited ever written. I recall a key episode in John Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' (1919) in which Richard Hannay's golden-haired girlfriend Mary Lamington awaits a late-night visit by villain Moxon Ivery who has proposed to her - the situation anticipates both *Suspicion* and *Notorious* - and who will shortly ask her to accompany him to his mother's house. As Mary waits for him, '[s]he tried to distract her mind by repeating poetry, and the thing that came into her head was Keats's "Nightingale", an odd poem for that time and place.' (If, gentle reader, you can grasp the full implications of that passage, you will surely be well on the way to understanding the obliqueness of some of *Hitchcock's* best scenes.)[40] I also recall that a story, 'The Alien Corn', by another of the director's favourite authors, W. Somerset Maugham, takes its title from a line in Keats's poem.

Krohn's book provides evidence of the life/death ambiguity that is everywhere present in *Vertigo*, et al. Edith Head flatly said that green in *Vertigo* is the colour of death (p. 194), but the sequoia forest scene (which has chthonic undertones) exists to remind us that green is *also* the colour of life: 'Their true name is *Sequoia sempervirans* - always green, ever-living.' Fascinatingly, the nun's words at the end of the film ('I heard voices - God have mercy') were dubbed by Kim Novak (p. 194), which I consider another sign of the life/death force which Judy/Madeleine and the (chthonic, black-garbed) nun both represent - if you take the nun's rejection of one kind of motherhood for another to be significant. Such a life/death force and its attendant ambiguity are akin respectively to the philosopher Schopenhauer's concept of the world's Will and the aesthetics and ethics of transcendance (both those things) which he formulated for coping with the ravaging Will: a form of 'dying in order to live'.[41] So when Krohn writes of *Vertigo* in Gnostic terms, actually using the expression 'glimpses of what lies behind the veil of life and death' (p. 194), he is effectively referring to the veil of Maya, the Hindu expression appropriated by Schopenhauer as a metaphor of our myopic worldly condition. Of course, both Schopenhauer and Keats, fellow children of the Romantic Age, saw the world in overlapping ways - Keats's concept of 'negative capability', for example, eschewing 'irritable reaching after fact and reason', markedly resembles the wise detachment advocated by Schopenhauer. (For a note on the veil of Maya, and the crucial role that human sympathy and compassion - and art - may play in helping us to dispel illusion, however fleetingly, check the entry on *The Birds* in my book, pp. 164-65.)

Logically I now turn to *The Birds* for one last illustration of Krohn's admirable analysis that so often gives insight into Hitchcock's work overall. The director, we learn (p.240), had recently thought of filming a science-fiction novel, 'The Mind Thing', by Frederic Brown. In the final chapters, the hero is besieged in an isolated cabin by a variety of alien-driven animals and birds. Did the novel, wonders Krohn, sharpen Hitchcock's awareness during the shooting of *The Birds* of what was implied by his alternately omniscient and subjective camera? At one point in the film, the (subjective) camera is even accused by a character of *causing* the bird attacks. Further, the film is replete with related epistemological *mysteries*, instanced by Cathy's unanswerable question about why people kill people (quoted by Krohn on p. 247) and the news broadcast announcing that the reason for the birds' attacks 'does not seem clear as yet' (lines which Krohn hints may have been pencilled into Evan Hunter's script by Hitchcock himself - p. 249). (By the way, Krohn draws a parallel with the enigmatic car radio messages heard in Cocteau's *Orphée*, but of course there is a still earlier precedent in Hitchcock's own work: the 'nonsensical' Resistance broadcasts heard in *Aventure Malgache* [1944].) In point of fact, none of these philosophical matters is unfamiliar to anyone who knows Schopenhauer's description of the world. They are all aspects of the creative/destructive Will, a life/death force which drives us at every turn, but which is finally unknowable because of our subjective human condition. The Will is thus the ultimate villain - and in *The Birds* its symbol is surely the birds themselves - but such is the *principium individuationis* (principle of individuation) that we ourselves are blameworthy for what befalls us. Out of ignorance and selfishness and pettiness, we allow -and even encourage - the Will to have its way in us, thereby more than likely bringing harm to our immediate circle and beyond. Schopenhauer extracts a moral principal here, an appeal to quietism based on wisdom, such that even going to the cinema might be thought a culpable act - as Hitchcock's camera at times implies, not altogether jokingly. Paradoxically, though, Hitchcock's films *also* appeal to the life-affirming (call it Nietzschean) as opposed to life-denying (call it Schopenhauerian) aspects of the Will in us, and/or our attitudes to them. Hence both the films' peculiar ambiguity and their power to engross us.

In his book 'Schopenhauer' (1994), Christopher Janaway inadvertently illuminates much of Hitchcock's work, I think, by noting how Schopenhauer opposed to his (Kant-derived) concept of Will a resort to the liberating knowledge offered by Plato. 'Schopenhauer's philosophy really took shape', writes Janaway (p. 22), 'once he attained the distinction between thing in itself [will] and Platonic Ideas: the first the murky reality underlying the empirical world in which the individual toils and tries to understand the connection of things, the other an exceptional vision to aspire to, of all connections undone and a brighter reality contemplated without striving and pain.'

For me, that evokes the endings or climaxes of several Hitchcock films, whether Lina's 'Keatsian' surrender without a struggle (or 'irritable reaching after fact and reason') that Hitchcock wanted for *Suspicion* ('Will it [the poison] be painless?' she resignedly asks herself),[42] or the decidedly parodic ending of *Psycho* in which Lila Crane has a cautionary

encounter with an implacable force (or anyway its proxy)[43] and Norman Bates turns into a virtual Buddhist, yielding to the Mother of all principles - call it the ultimate anima-principle - and is last heard intoning, 'I'm not going to even harm that fly!'[44] Also, there is the ending of *The Birds* ...

Compassion, traditionally a feminine quality, does indeed come into play at the end of *The Birds*, as Mrs Brenner, seeing Melanie's terrible wounds after the attic scene, murmurs 'Poor thing'. It's as if Melanie were herself a wounded seagull, which is apt given that Will, like the birds, is everywhere. Melanie is now at one with the birds,[45] as we *all* are if only our categorising, subjective minds would open up and see it ('all [false] connections undone'). Lina's self-sacrifice (which I admit to not fully understanding, whereas the 'To a Nightingale' scene in Buchan's 'Mr Standfast' makes perfect sense to me), and Norman Bates's dissolution back into the Mother (principle) from which he came,[46] both point towards the true seriousness that informs the ending of *The Birds*. Moreover, the film's note of compassion invites us to share the potential breakthrough in knowledge (call it Gnosis) made by Melanie. Suitably, the slanting rays of sunlight outside the Brenner house indicate the 'brighter reality contemplated without striving and pain' (Schopenhauer) and/or the absence of 'irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Keats) - states that may after all be attainable.[47]

I'll try and sum this matter up and give it a focus. Krohn analyses the attic scene in *The Birds* in ambiguous terms that match the film's own (pp. 250-51). On the one hand, he reports that Hitchcock told Tippi Hedren before the start of shooting that Melanie enters the bird-filled attic and slams the door 'in a self-sacrificial way' (though again I must say that I don't fully understand the logic of this - the moment has always looked phoney to me - since surely Melanie could have saved everyone trouble by retreating back out the door and *then* slamming it?) But in fact Krohn proceeds to observe that Melanie's 'falling back and knocking the door shut when the attack starts [now] looks like an accident'. (Perversely, I have always felt at this point that you can tell that Hitchcock had *directed* it that way!). Finally, adding to the confusion, he qualifies his last point: such a so-called accident 'can also be interpreted, in Robin Wood's phrase, as a gesture of "voluptuous surrender and prostration" before her attackers'. This of course sounds like Lina's acceptance of Johnnie's poisoned glass of milk (which I suggested in 'MacGuffin' #7 is like the act of sex itself, towards which Lina has always been ambivalent).[48] Yet clearly, I'd say, Hitchcock had also wanted Melanie's 'self-sacrifice' to extend the tradition of the Christ-figures in his films (starting with Fearogod in *The Mountain Eagle* and the Ivor Novello character in *The Lodger*) who suffer or take upon themselves the evil of others for the good of a community (if not humankind in general). And he had probably seen a valid psychology in this because, as both Christianity and Schopenhauer (the latter drawing on Eastern wisdom) teach, it is precisely in an act of surrender of one's striving, wilful self to a higher power (God, Will) that salvation may be had. Lila in *Psycho* and Melanie in *The Birds* lead us, the audience, to a point where we experience, albeit vicariously, an analogue of the 'cleansing' that Marion in *Psycho* had too wilfully sought earlier. Asked what was the deepest logic of his films, Hitchcock replied: 'To put the audience through it.' *Right* throught it, he might have added.[49]

To encompass everything, to leave nothing out, was a tradition of German Expressionist cinema. Accordingly, the German films were typically microcosms of their time and place, whose sociological vision was pessimistic: a patently corrupt and/or economically and spiritually destitute society wasn't likely to change much. (Lang's 1927 *Metropolis* appears some sort of anomaly here but only because of its futuristic content.) Given that such a worldly pessimism, based on a determined attempt to see the world whole, in empirical terms, also informs Schopenhauer's *Weltanschauung*, it may not be coincidental that the scriptwriters of the definitive German Expressionist film, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919), chose a photograph of Schopenhauer in his old age as the model for Caligari's outward appearance.[50] In addition, a line of dialogue from *Caligari* may remind us of the no less typical *subjectivity* if not *hubris* of the German films: 'I must know everything ... I must penetrate into his innermost secrets ... I must myself become Caligari.'[51] (It's scarcely surprising that Murnau chose at this time to film a version of *Faust*.) Largely out of this tradition came Hitchcock's films, albeit adapted to British and, later, American, genres and their audiences. It seems to me that much of what I've been describing in the past few pages, and shown informing *The Birds* in particular, is thereby explained (or anyway best understood). Finally, I sense in reading Krohn's 'Hitchcock at Work' that its author has consistently shown an awareness of just such a largeness of purpose in Hitchcock. (It must be added parenthetically that I did not feel that awareness when reading DeRosa's book.)

* * *

Of course, both books contain valuable research material. Sometimes it is mutually supportive or just slightly variant. For instance, Krohn reports (p. 204) that the title *North by Northwest* was mooted as early as Ernest Lehman's first draft screenplay, then was dropped until much later. DeRosa indirectly confirms this when he quotes (without comment) John Michael Hayes saying that back when he and Hitchcock were working on *The Trouble With Harry*, '[i]n every spare moment we ... kicked around ideas for something called *North by Northwest*' (p. 145). So much for the notion that the title was thought up at the last minute by MGM story editor Kenneth McKenna!

Especially interesting are both authors' comments on the so-called 'Portents' hymn sung by the congregation at the Ambrose Chapel in the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. In this matter, *prima facie* DeRosa has delved more deeply. Krohn tells us (p. 178) that the hymn 'seems to have been written specially for the film to avoid paying royalties for an existing hymn' - but DeRosa says (p. 277) that the lyrics 'appear to date back to 1791 from a volume entitled *Psalms and Hymns of Magdalene Church*'. Consistent with the tentative phrasing used by both authors here, they even quote the lyrics slightly differently! Not only that, but - fascinatingly - they offer quite divergent interpretations. Here are the lyrics (as given by Krohn):

> From whence these portents around
> That heaven and earth amaze?
> Wherefore do earthquakes cleave the ground?
> Why hides the sun in shame?
>
> Let sin no more my soul enslave
> Break now the tyrants' chain.
> Oh save me whom thou canst to save,
> Nor bleed nor die in vain.

And here is Krohn's reading (p. 178): 'The person uttering these words, who is present at the Crucifixion, knows that the earthquakes and darkness are portents of his salvation. In the second verse he prays to the dying Christ to free him from the tyrant, Original Sin.' This sounds incontestable (in which case, note that the plural construction of the line, 'Break now the tyrants' chain' needs altering - which is in fact how *DeRosa* renders it). Such a reading goes with the arguable tendency of many Hitchcock films, including this one, to lead the viewer to a point where he/she is offered (limited) redemption - that is, if the viewer is ready for it ...[52]

Appearing to ignore - or overlook - this reading, DeRosa interprets the role of the hymn differently. 'The hymn', he says, 'warns of the greater stakes in the two musical sequences to follow at the Albert Hall and at the embassy.' (p. 277) He continues: 'The first verse, growing darker with earthquakes and the sun hiding in shame, is a foreshadowing of the Albert Hall sequence and its ... "Storm Cloud Cantata." The second verse foretells Mrs Drayton's rebellion against her husband at the embassy - "Let sin no more my soul enslave/ Break now the tyrant's chain" - when she decides to help Ben escape with Hank and stands up to Drayton, saying, "You've got to let the boy go!"'

It needs only brief reflection to see that these two readings are not incompatible. The almost shabby English couple, the Draytons, are like a 'shadow' version of the more fortunate McKennas, and *both* couples are representative after their fashion of how things may go for us in this not exactly best of all possible worlds. (Cf, say, the situation in *I Confess*, with its two socially-contrasted couples, the Grandforts and the Kellers; note, too, that Mrs Keller finally stands up against her by-now corrupt husband in a way that foreshadows Mrs Drayton's protest in the later film.) Accordingly, Mr Drayton may finally 'represent' the ineradicable Original Sin in all of us, an interpretation which is consistent, I think, with what I suggested above about how a Hitchcock film may lead the viewer to a decisive moment (the culmination of several in each film) where essential matters become focussed, offering us finally at least a glimpse of what belongs to Man and what to God.[53]

Note, however, that Krohn's reading is fundamental, DeRosa's less so. (Historians distinguish between an event's underlying and immediate causes, and something like that distinction seems to apply here.) You could jettison DeRosa's analysis without greatly affecting the film's substance, but Krohn's reading has a bedrock quality. I would add that Krohn's reading proceeds from the literal text (and texture) of the film, whereas DeRosa's looks more opportunistic and even to be 'read into' the film. On the whole, these distinctions seem to me to hold for the two books overall.

* * *

Still on matters of scholarship, then, I'd like to conclude this review by itemising instances of the sort of thing just mentioned. Even before 'Writing with Hitchcock' came out, DeRosa claimed to me that the reason Hitchcock often adapted films from lesser-known novels and plays was that he didn't want the original author to be a rival. On *Rebecca*, DeRosa said, Hitchcock had fretted because of his billing after both Selznick and Daphne du Maurier, and had vowed not to let such a thing happen again. DeRosa repeats this claim in his book (p. 125n), but *gives no source and little evidence*. At best, the claim strikes me as exaggerated. For one thing, Hitchcock clearly had his favourite (rather middle-brow) authors, some of whom he knew personally, such as Helen Simpson, and whose novels or plays he would very likely have filmed anyway because they offered him cinematic or technical stimulus. (Robert Hichens's 'The Paradine Case', Patrick Hamilton's 'Rope', and Simpson's 'Under Capricorn' were all works that he had long thought of filming - though it's true that the latter was seen by him primarily as a vehicle for bringing back his favourite actress to that time, Ingrid

Bergman.) For another thing, Hitchcock's theory adduced to Truffaut that classic novels have already found their perfect form - so why meddle with them? - is obviously put forward in good faith. Not that Hitchcock was rigid when it came to choosing source material. He seriously wanted to film Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' with Cary Grant, and I gather that the main reason the project fell through was simply that Laurence Olivier beat them to it![54]

Another instance of DeRosa's not-fully-substantiated claims relates to his central theme: that Hitchcock tried to give the impression that he alone created his films. I would contest this suggestion, up to a point, on two grounds. The first reason for contesting it is simply that Bill Krohn's book gives ample evidence nullifying DeRosa's position in which the screenwriter is seen as ascendant or at least equal to Hitchcock as a creative figure. A Hitchcock film is a Hitchcock film, indubitably. (Samuel Taylor has spoken of the way Hitchcock got the sort of material he wanted from his screenwriters by what could afterwards be seen as a process of osmosis: two minds had become one.)

My other ground for questioning DeRosa's claim is that he himself several times provides evidence to the contrary. On p. xi he quotes Hitchcock as saying, 'very often the director is no better than his script'. On p. 105, we learn that the director publicly complimented John Michael Hayes for having done 'a remarkably fine job on the screenplay of [*To Catch a*] *Thief* ... when you're forced to cut such a script you're left with an awful feeling of guilt'. Hitchcock had already told reporters during the filming, 'Proper casting, not only of performers but of writers, and a close relationship between the artistic and technical people involved in a production, are all vitally important to the success of a good suspense film' (p. 119). And on p. 166, DeRosa tells us that 'Hitchcock valued Hayes's talents, which developed significantly under his tutelage'. (Significantly, too, Hitchcock wanted Hayes to work on the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series.) Put all of these instances of the director's frank acknowledgment of his indebtedness to the work of others with further such instances to be found in 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' (1995), edited by Sidney Gottliebv, and you see a rather different Hitchcock to the one DeRosa would paint. Further, I think that Hitchcock was often of necessity merely going along with the simplifications required by the popular media of his day. *Anyone* who has had dealings with the media knows the pressures to keep a narrow focus and to dramatise. Besides, I'm not aware of other directors of Hitchcock's day (outside of Russia and perhaps Ingmar Bergman's Sweden) who were any more eloquent in public about the work of their collaborators.

Lastly, I'll cite the following as an instance of where DeRosa (cf his analysis of *The Trouble With Harry*) again seems to me to ignore a film's most fundamental level. In the 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, we're told, 'it is by pure chance that Jo (and later Ben) arrives at the site of the assassination attempt' (p. 279). In basic story terms, that's true enough: Jo and Ben head for the Albert Hall simply because they need to contact Buchanan, the police official who is attending a diplomatic affair there. But of course their son has been kidnapped by the would-be assassins to silence them - all along, both have 'known too much' about the planned killing, if not its intended victim.[55] Besides, there is something very satisfying about the seemingly fortuitous way everything comes together like this. Given the London setting, there's a Dickensian sense of the power of melodrama to touch the ineffable - Hitchcock's (and Angus MacPhail's) very next film, *The Wrong Man* (1957), would capitalise on just such a sense (and its psychological/epistemological underpinnings).[56] Moreover, Hitchcock was careful to introduce into his film a thematic thrust (what Krohn calls a 'fatalistic tinge, which is reversed in the last scene' - p. 178) that gives a further dimension again. The matter of 'knowing too much' becomes finally the already-cited question informing so many Hitchcock endings: what belongs to Man and what to God? In other words, in what sense, if any, can we talk of Free Will?[57]

* * *

So how exactly do I rate Krohn's book? While I was reading it, I felt at times that the author was skirting a certain brittleness in his grasp of Hitchcock (especially of the British films) - but doing it so well that the book becomes a *tour de force* by that very fact. Once or twice, I heard echoes of my own material published first on my website, but nearly always I concluded that Krohn and I had simply arrived at insights or conclusions by similar, or even divergent, paths. Occasionally, too, Krohn would say something that went against a supposed fact, or attribution, in my 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story', as when he claims (p. 105) of *The Paradine Case* that Hitchcock brought 'the picture in under budget by filming the courtroom scenes on his Old Bailey set ... using four cameras'. According to what is reported in my book (p. 103), the use of the four cameras indeed 'speeded things up and saved money, [but this] was just as well since the film [still] cost an astronomical $4,000,000'. (I don't know for sure, but I suspect that this time Krohn has made a rare slip-up!) Lastly, I would occasionally rebel inwardly against Krohn's explication of abstruse imagery, as when in describing Alex Sebastian in *Notorious* he took licence from Ben Hecht's second draft to tell us (p. 101) that 'mythologically Alex is Hades, who bore Persephone off to his kingdom in Hell'; and Alicia, in the same film, 'like all the heroines of Hitchcock's films of the 1940s ... is [indeed] a modern version of classical antiquity's most famous dying and reborn vegetable goddess', i.e., Persephone.[58] This might be true, I told myself (mindful that in 'MacGuffin' #16 I analysed *Spellbound* in terms of fertility myth), but it doesn't get us very far.

Well, shame on me! In retrospect, I readily accept Krohn's reading of the film here, and find it (and the author's scholarly vigour) instructive. None of my original reservations about the book matters in the light of one simple fact: overall, Krohn gives us the best insights into Hitchcock's working methods, and artistry, since the publication of Truffaut's 'Le cinéma selon Hitchcock' thirty-five years ago. In addition, the book is lavishly illustrated, often with rare, astutely chosen and placed (and generously sized) frame blow-ups, many of them in colour; as for the text, it is supple and intelligent, and contains found truths of a high order in practically every paragraph.

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Notes

1. Neff himself doesn't source his claim. I believe he is referring to a remark made by Ivor Montagu which, on examination, appears more speculative than conclusive on Montagu's part.

2. This step by Hayes effectively foreshadowed the sundering of his working relationship with Hitchcock that soon followed.

3. Nor does either author note the provenance of that title in a famous passage from Shakespeare's 'The Tempest': 'Our revels now are ended. These our actors,/ As I foretold you, were all spirits and/ Are melted into air, into thin air:/ .../ ... We are such stuff/ As dreams are made on, and our little life/ Is rounded with a sleep!' (IV, 2) It would of course have been the second time that Hitchcock had raided 'The Tempest' for a film title (cf. '*Rich and Strange*'). Of further interest is how the title was simultaneously being considered for the episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' eventually released as "The Vanishing Lady" (and starring Pat Hitchcock): airdate 30 October, 1955. The notion of life as a dream informed several Hitchcock films of the 1950s, including *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*. (I would add that the notion greatly appealed to the philosopher Schopenhauer, who applied it to his *Weltanschauung* of the world as Will and Representation [reality and appearance] and quoted both Shakespeare and the Jesuit poet/dramatist Calderón, amongst others, in support.)

4. Hayes himself acknowledged that plotting wasn't his forte: 'Plotting was not my greatest talent' (quoted in DeRosa, p. 92).

5. Not only that, but he may well have obtained from stage melodrama inspiration for the notion of the MacGuffin. The very same paragraph from Smith part-quoted in the text also lists such typical ingredients of melodrama as the following: 'Awful Secrets are always revealed [by the play's end] and The Missing Papers found. These necessary documents provide endless excitement. Heroes are always searching for secret despatches, scientific formulae, forgotten marriage-lines, mortgage deeds, holograph confessions or forged receipts, and every villain hides a will of his own.'

6. I thank Richard Franklin for providing me a taped copy of Hitchcock's USC remarks.

7. A couple of other times, or more, Krohn has -gratifyingly - confirmed a hunch of mine about a Hitchcock film. In his book, he notes (p.178) that the title of the song sung by Doris Day in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), "Que Sera, Sera", was indeed taken from the Rosanno Brazzi character's family motto (seen on a tombstone) in Joseph Mankiewicz's *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) - with 'Q' substituted for 'C', notes Krohn, so as to give the title appeal in Spanish and French-language markets. And recently Krohn's archival research into *Suspicion* has shown that Hitchcock and writer Samson Raphaelson were indeed - to judge from one script draft - thinking of Johnnie (Cary Grant) as a bit of a rake - hence the allusion in the finished film to Johnnie's membership of the Hogarth Club!

8. Thus he is as *troubling* as Ballyntine's suppressed memory in *Spellbound* (1945) of having accidentally killed his young brother. As I show in my book (p.96), that incident serves as the film's suitably Freudianised metaphor of Original Sin; and in both *Spellbound* and *Harry* the characters are guilty innocents - or (if you prefer) innocently culpable. There's further discussion of the MacGuffin-as-metaphor on the FAQs page of the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website.

9. Of course, I'm pleased that DeRosa thinks highly of Sikov's book, seeing as I had myself cited it favourably in my own book (pp. 134-35).

10. There had been an exactly similar name change, I'm reminded, in the first version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. There, the name of the assassin in the script, Levine, was changed to Ramon in the film to avoid offending Jews. See DeRosa, p. 312 (n153).

11. Oops! This may not be so! Doris Day may have got it right after all, and DeRosa may have got it wrong! I was sufficiently puzzled by the discrepancy between the two reports, to contact Bill Krohn before going to press and ask if he could explain why Day appeared to have mis-remembered what happened. (Note: emails I sent to Steven DeRosa were not answered.) Bill, I said, Steven DeRosa reports that Scenes 146A and 147E were taken eleven and ten times each. Here's Bill's typically forthright (and perceptive) reply: 'So? Scene 146 is the one where Ben forces Jo to take the drug, ending with her saying "I am now relaxed and waiting." 146 or 146A, depending on the numbering system used at Paramount, would be the particular set-up that covered it in a master shot. That's not the one she said she did in one take. 147 is the long scene that ends with her breaking down. If AH decided to cover it in a master, her "one take" would be 147 or 147A - and if you watch, this is in fact the case: It's the long take of Stewart in MLS walking around the room with Day on the bed, her back to us (her line about being relaxed is repeated at the beginning, or looped in). At the end of it, she gets up, he takes her in his arms, and she cracks. This is intercut with at least three other setups showing Stewart and Day in MS, and then tighter on Day, but the crackup - the shot she's remembering in her memoir - happens in what must have been the first MLS after lunch, which would be listed as 147 or 147A - again, depending on how a Paramount script supervisor would count. It wouldn't be 147E, that's for sure. 147E was almost certainly a closeup, of Day or Stewart, to be used with shots taken before, when the breakdown had already occurred. I'm not surprised AH shot it several times. The only way Day's recollection of doing the scene in one take could be literally true would be if the entire three pages were covered in the film in one uninterrupted shot, with no other setups, which is certainly not the case.' Thanks Bill. I'm allowing the text to stand so as to accommodate this footnote, which I might not otherwise have had the opportunity to write up.

12. The film now begins with a shot of a travel poster proclaiming 'If you love life, you'll love France'. This parallels the emphasis on the life-force in *Harry* - though, initially, that film's characters - like Robie in *Thief* - appear to be existing in a state of retreat from real engagement with life. (Such a theme may also be detected in *Rear Window* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.)

13. I suppose that a good instance of the last-named - ironic framing or transition - is the eye-into-plughole transition in *Psycho*: life-to death, organic-to-inorganic, being-to-nothingness. It has a rough parallel in the bone-to-spaceship transition early in Kubrick's *2001*, except that the 'irony'

there (different degrees of sophistication of tool or weapon - what Marshall McLuhan called 'extensions of man'; the suggestion of *plus ça change* ...) is making a more purely intellectual point. (I'm taking the opportunity to note here the fundamental life/death concern that is so typical of Hitchcock.)

14. Such characters may be found in other Hitchcock films, though. Several of Hitchcock's villains are clearly incorrigible. And do we really believe that, say, Roger Thornhill in *North by Northwest* is going to mend his divorcé ways at the end of that film? Further, perhaps it's worth noting that characters in Dickens are often especially set in their ways - almost like impaled insects wriggling futilely on a board - including even the heroes (notably in the darker, later novels), such as John Harmon in 'Our Mutual Friend'.

15. Cf her mother's remark to Robie about sending her to finishing-school: 'I think they finished her!'

16. All of which is akin to what Schopenhauer taught: that though one's 'empirical character'may change, our underlying 'intelligible character' (which exists in the noumenal realm, and is essentally unknowable) does not. Hitchcock presents this truth about human nature expressionistically, so to speak.

17. I have recently written a slightly revised and expanded account of this aspect of *Rear Window* - its *archetypal* aspect, I've called it - based on what I originally wrote on that film in 'MacGuffin' #23. This new account may be published in 'SPFX' magazine and/or - eventually - on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website.

18. John Michael Hayes calls it 'my favourite sonnet from Shakespeare'; DeRosa, pp. 139-40.

19. The pre-natal experience (or even the whole pre-Oedipal one, up until the child turns four) is traditionally associated with 'timelessness', as is the state of death. From Mother's womb (back) to Mother Earth is the journey we all must take, with fluctuating degrees of consciousness - which, though, is never absolute. (If it were, Kant's and Schopenhauer's distinction between phenomenal and noumenal realms - the latter essentially unknowable - would be invalid.) Yet artists, philosophers, mystics, and others, have often felt that a supra-consciousness is possible, and some have suggested that it amounts to an 'escape' from time. On the other hand, common sense says that this is an illusion. Schopenhauer resorted to Plato's notion of ideal 'forms' to try and reconcile, or anyway move between, the two positions; Hitchcock, you feel, simply kept an open mind and thus, as so often, remained close to Schopenhauer's particular largesse of outlook.

20. Scottie's impotence - real and/or symbolic - is established early in the film: his acrophobia is itself symbolic in that respect - in the final anaysis, a symbol of a symbol (acrophobia > sexual impotence > metaphysical impotence). When he meets Madeleine, and falls in love with her, he has something to prove, but clearly this is more than just a virility problem. He embarks on a quest, or odyssey, that makes him a virtual Faust-figure, an everyman. (Note all the great stories coming together!) He even dreams of getting over his 'impotence', and being 'omnipotent', *permanently* or in *eternity*: this is the meaning of the religious and other symbolism that accompanies his attempt to turn Judy (back) into Madeleine, an 'eternal-feminine' figure who seems to possess (or be possessed by) the very secrets of the grave itself.

21. I originally discussed this matter in 'MacGuffin' #20, and then in my book, p. 145. The mind's predisposition (Arthur Schopenhauer tells us) to 'comprehend' all phenomena and all experience using just *three* categories of understanding - 'time', 'space', and 'causality' (the latter subject to the 'principle of sufficient reason') - represents Schopenhauer's own boiled-down version of Kant. But the implication is the same. What we 'know' is always 'subjective' - because whatever our 'knowledge' consists of, it remains purely 'mental' and subject to human (mental) nature, while non-phenomenal 'reality', the noumenal, escapes us. And even within the limitations that human (mental) nature imposes, further limitations apply because of the capacity and background and situation of any particular individual. If 'God' is 'ultimate reality', then not only is 'God' unknowable but even the most able of us is puny indeed. This hasn't stopped artists, mystics, philosophers, etc., from having 'intimations of immortality', or from reporting experiences that seemed to offer 'transcendence' of mortal limitations via heightened or intensified consciousness. But Manny in *The Wrong Man* knows none of this, and the film seems predicated on how he feels overwhelmed by events related to the time-space-causality nexus of our everyday understanding.

22. In 'To His Coy Mistress'. For example: 'The Grave's a fine and private place,/ But none I think do there embrace.'

23. Cf Krohn (pp. 220-21) on how Norman has failed to negotiate Lacan's mirror-phase. In related vein, Krohn notes (p. 278) the symbolism of the island in (the script of) *Mary Rose*: the island's representative quality of infantile narcissism is apparent when Mary describes it to Kenneth: 'It's so beautiful and loving and there is only oneself ... One needn't ever ... search.' Such imagery relates to the pre-Oedipal 'innocence' evoked in *Spellbound* and poeticised in *Marnie* (for instance, the golden colouring of Marnie's hair when she's riding Forio).

24. Novello was partnered onstage by Robin Irvine, and the scene was the one where the two schoolboys are summoned by the headmaster. See Charles Barr, 'English Hitchcock' (1999), p. 18 and p. 220.

25. See my book, p. 16.

26. Cf the photographers who hound Larita Filton in *Easy Virtue* - without them, and their 'stand-ins' (e.g., the pity-less woman on the jury), the film would be dead, dramatically-speaking.

27. The uncle's line stayed in, as did some others (e.g., Kane's speech to Pat about trusting Tobin 'just because he's got a ranch and a lovely pool'); others served as trade-offs.

28. See my book, p. 83

29. Sally Benson wrote 'Meet Me in St Louis'. Watching Vincente Minnelli's 1944 film again recently, I thought of *Shadow of a Doubt* during the scene where the teenage daughter receives a long-distance call from an eligible young man in New York, and the family at the dinner table all listen in. However, according to Krohn (p. 62), the specific reason Hitchcock employed Benson was that he wanted someone to depict 'life in a [go-ahead] small town lit by neon signs' - Benson's 'Junior Miss' stories are set in a Manhattan brownstone. As for Herb and Joe's conversations, they seem to owe much to the not-always-saintly conversations between Mr Morland and his friend Mr Amy in J.M. Barrie's 'Mary Rose'.

30. See Norman Lloyd, 'Stages: On Life in Theatre, Film and Television' (Limelight pb, 1993), p. 72. Cf Krohn, p. 92, where he speculates about *Notorious* that Hitchcock intended 'to strip away any explanations for Dev's behaviour until the moment he confesses all to Alicia'. (An implication of this, I take it, is that explanations *per se* weren't important to Hitchcock, and that if audiences didn't take them all in, no matter.)

31. There was at least one other real-life 'inspiration' for Uncle Charlie. Krohn, p. 58, notes that a serial-killer from New York was hiding out in the bosom of his sister's family in Hartford, California, when he was arrested in 1939.

32. Cf the mischevous accusation against Roddy by a waitress. But the film shows that males are no saints either (e.g., Roddy's friend who won't own up).

33. Alain de Botton has written amusingly, and well, of how Schopenhauer's 'Will' inveigles two people together whose only real suitability as future marriage partners is often that they complement each other genetically - for the benefit of the offspring rather than the marriage. See Alain de Botton, 'The Consolations of Philosophy' (2000), pp. 183-202 passim.

34. I would interpret *The Birds* by saying that its feathered creatures are sent as emiseries of Will to awaken the complacent (dreaming) humans from their slumber - that the birds are effectively a *symbol* of the noumenal Will, a life-force that is also a death-force.

35. Did his recent neuralgia trigger the drinking this time?

36. Jason's quest in his ship named the 'Argo' for the Golden Fleece has Homeric echoes, of course.

37. I put it on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website in 1998, and it's still there.

38. H. Popper, "Jacob Boehme", in R. Cavendish (ed.), 'Man, Myth, and Magic' (1970), p. 301. Boehme influenced several later thinkers and mystics, including Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany, and the Quakers, William Law and William Blake in England. (p. 302)

39. The latter, airdate 25/10/59, was directed by Norman Lloyd from a story by Talmage Powell. Talmage told us that he was not responsible for the episode's title. Clearly someone at Shamley Productions had chosen it ...

40. Buchan's intimate knowledge of John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' and frequent citing of it, links more (I suggest) to the picaresque, Haggard-like aspect of such Hitchcock films as *The 39 Steps* and *North by Northwest*.

41. The Will is ambiguous by its very nature: both destructive and creative. Schopenhauer's aesthetic and ethical systems are ambiguous both because of the (Christianity-akin) paradox of 'dying in order to live' and because they're 'all in the mind' (though, hopefully, translatable into either action or desistance from action) ...

42. This amounts *also* to a 'Wagnerian' moment - it would, after all, have been a 'love-death' - *and* a pragmatic one, because Lina has ensured that husband Johnnie won't go free. Hitchcock the realist has it every which way!

43. At least two other Hitchcock heroines are brought to a moment of surrender of the self to some 'superior force', it seems to me. I'm thinking of Jo's *involuntary* scream in the Albert Hall in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) and of Melanie's surrender to the birds in the attic in *The Birds*.

44. It's worth remarking that Keats thought Shakespeare the prime example of negative capability - the capacity to enter fully into one's characters and their viewpoints - as opposed to the partisan approach of Milton and the 'wordsworthian or egotistical sublime'. But a certain ambivalence sometimes led Keats to express admiration for the Miltonic approach. Douglas Bush writes: 'As artist he fluctuates - and is aware of his fluctuations - between belief in the poetic efficacy of a wise passiveness and belief in the active pursuit of rational knowledge and philosophy.' (Quoted in 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature', note on 'Negative capability'.) Obviously this isn't the same as Nietzsche's distinction (in 'The Birth of Tragedy') between 'Dionysian' (ecstatic) and 'Apollonian' (rational), but it's intriguing to speculate on the different approaches to 'knowledge'and its forms thus opened up, or indeed on their relation to any simple split between 'feminine' (passive) and 'masculine' (active) - though let's remember that sex, art, mysticism, etc., are often said to offer a *transcending* or *bridging* function rather than to be an either/or matter. It's in this area, I think, that Schopenhauer's (basically cognitive) aesthetics and (compassionate) ethics meet Hitchcock's pragmatics of filmmaking ...

45. Earlier, when the gull that seemed to have 'lost its way in the dark' crashed into Annie Hayworth's front door, *she* had said, 'Poor thing!' But the ratiocinative Melanie had been quick to point out that in fact there was a full moon! Note, too, that the line 'Poor thing!' is also used in *Vertigo* where it's given to Midge. *Vertigo* is very much a film about the sadness of life and what to do about it - sheer egoism, of course, is shown not to work.

46. Cf the 'going home (to Mother Earth)' theme in *The Trouble With Harry*, and the significance of the chthonic 'Mother Superior' (the black-garbed nun) who finally prevails in *Vertigo*. (The chthonic *Sequoia* forest scene in that film, which in retrospect appears absolutely central, is clearly an equivalent of the autumnal death-and-mutability imagery in *Harry* - and, grimly, the faecal swamp in *Psycho* ...)

47. Given the emphasis in the final scenes of *The Birds* on compassion (cf the end of *Marnie*, where Mark says, 'It's time to have a little compassion for yourself'), one is again reminded of Schopenhauer's ethics - though also, naturally, of Catholicism. (Carl Jung, of Protestant background, praised this 'feminine' aspect of the Church's tradition and regretted its relative absence in Protestantism.) Madame Blanche in the opening scene of *Family Plot* foresees a time when there will be 'no more suffering, no more pain' - arguably another Schopenhauerian (or Catholic) touch.

48. Bill Krohn's recent remarks about *Suspicion*, on the Web and in the French journal 'Trafic', likewise interpret the glass of milk as a fellatio symbol. (Note. In the first script draft of *The Trouble With Harry*, young Arnie squirts milk at both his prospective stepfather and at the dead Harry, his real father: no doubt some sort of Oedipal gesture by the spirited lad! Cf Sikov, p. 173 and p. 253, n19.) Lina in *Suspicion*, unlike her counterpart in the novel, does seem ambivalent about her husband's sexual advances, and thus effectively imitates 'I' (also played by Joan Fontaine) in *Rebecca*, another at-times shrinking woman who must manage a household as best she can while sexually frustrating her husband in the process (though it's not 100% clear who is to blame - the traumatised Maxim, living in the shadow of his first wife, or the inexperienced 'I' who is secretly tempted towards lesbianism). Lina's closing of the bedroom door in Johnnie's face, after they return from dinner at Isobel's, is very pointed - and it's a gesture that will be echoed in *Spellbound*, *Under Capricorn*, and *Marnie*.

49. Kierkegaard remarks somewhere of the subjective path - on which he places the highest value - that it must indeed be followed all the way 'to the other side'. A film like *Psycho*, I would argue, offers a classic case of audiences being made to experience their subjectivity - call it 'Will' - in all its life/death aspects, and amoral seeking, the better for them to be 'purged' or 'cleansed' (however fleetingly).

50. S.S. Prawer, 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' (1980), p. 173.

51. Quoted by Prawer, p. 164.

52. Or anyway is given a glimpse of what 'redemption' (or 'purgation' or 'enlightenment') may mean. Such an outcome happens to be consistent with what is offered (albeit without guarantee) in Schopenhauer's aesthetics, and represents, I think, knowledge of what Manny in *The Wrong Man* does *not* comprehend, namely, his whole position vis-à-vis the time/space/causality nexus of (subjective) human understanding. By 'ready' (for redemption) I mean psychologically, cognitively, spiritually.

53. The decisive moment here is of course Mrs Drayton's 'inspired' resolve to acknowledge an evil to which she has literally been married. Cf Rupert's (admittedly not fully convincing) soul-searching at the end of *Rope*, and his question: 'Did you think you were God, Brandon?' In *Under Capricorn*, Milly, of all people, reminds us how 'The Lord moves in mysterious ways,/His wonders to perform.' And, at the end of *I Confess*, as the camera retreats back across the river from the representative city of Quebec, we're reminded (by the skyline) that it may be a city of churches but *not* the City of God. As for the matter of a society in which inequality of opportunity or endowment or wealth all figure, this is detectable as a theme of many Hitchcock films. In *Under Capricorn*, Milly is driven by her ill-conceived passion for Flusky who is married to Lady Henrietta though himself 'only a groom', a commoner - like the resentful, proud Milly. In *Strangers on a Train*, the lines from Kipling above a gateway at Forest Hills speak of life being a matter of both 'Triumph and Disaster', and it's not exactly clear which of Guy or Bruno is fundamentally the luckier or the unluckier, as the case may be. In *To Catch a Thief*, Robie earns himself the enmity of his former Resistance pals by the seemingly unfair way he has prospered while, as Danielle says, 'we [still] work like idiots for a loaf of bread'. You could fairly say that all of these nuances and shadings are part of Hitchcock's instinctive Expressionism ...

54. *Under Capricorn* shows the influence of Olivier's film: the prowling camera travelling even up and down staircases almost turns 'Minyago Yugilla' into another Elsinore!

55. Hitchcock, Hayes, and MacPhail could easily have had Jo and Ben guess the details of the intended assassination by reading a newspaper ('Important Dignitary Visits London Today'). But as Hitchcock once said, 'That's the easiest part, so why bother?'

56. I discussed this matter at some length in 'MacGuffin' #20, and, succinctly, in my book, pp. 144-45. In *The Wrong Man*, it seems to me, the thinking of Kant (1724-1804) and Schopenhauer (1788-1860) meets the visions of Blake (1757-1827) and Dickens (1812-70).

57. Krohn, p. 178, notes how Jo's singing of 'Que sera, sera' at the embassy 'becomes, in spite of the words, an expression of human will triumphing over adversity' - but arguably (it seems to me) she thereby only fulfills an even greater 'Will'. (Schopenhauer's prize-winning essay, 'On the Freedom of the Will', a classic text, argues powerfully that ultimately we *don't* have free will, whatever appearances may say. Of course, the matter isn't cut-and-dried - cf notes 19 and 21 above - but that's precisely the point here: Hitchcock's film reflects a 'shadow of a doubt' about the status of our worldly knowledge that we are destined - Willed - to retain until we die. Notice, further, that 'Que sera, sera' means 'What *will* be, *will* be' - our very language points to what is at stake.)

58. This echoes Lesley Brill's remarks in 'The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films' (1988) to the effect that 'most of Hitchcock's heroines' (p.12) are Persephone-figures whose Underworld adventures (and those of her mother Demeter) 'delineate a kernel myth for romance' (p. 72) and provide 'the mythic subfoundation of *The Lodger*' - as well as 'many of Hitchcock's [subsequent] films' (pp. 85-86).

New light on the prolific Charles Bennett

Background

Charles Bennett (1899-1995), actor, playwright, and screenwriter, began writing melodramas when he was a boy: see the excerpt from CB's 'Memoirs', edited by his son, John Charles Bennett, published on the Hitchcock Scholars/'MacGuffin' website. When CB's play 'Blackmail' was staged in London in 1928, starring Tallulah Bankhead as Alice, it attracted the interest of Alfred Hitchcock. The director chose the play as the basis of his last silent film and first sound film; it was adapted for the screen by Benn Levy and produced by British International Pictures. CB took no part in writing the screenplay. Nonetheless, he seized the opportunity of meeting Hitchcock, to whom he was introduced on the film's set, and the two men immediately became firm friends and drinking companions. CB entered the film industry soon afterwards. His first contract appears to have been with BIP (though see below) whose story editor, Walter Mycroft, one day suggested that the writer collaborate with Hitchcock. Mycroft pointed out that the studio owned the rights to the popular 'Bulldog Drummond' character created by 'Sapper' (H.C. McNeile), and that if CB would write a story about Drummond, the studio would assign Hitchcock to direct it. As events turned out, "Bulldog Drummond's Baby" - an original story by CB - remained in a drawer for several years. But when Hitchcock went to Gaumont-British in 1933, he needed a script and asked CB to help re-write the Drummond story, which now became *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (with Drummond gone). This was the first Bennett-Hitchcock collaboration, and the rest is cinema history. CB's subsequent screenplays included *The 39 Steps* (1935), *Secret Agent* (1936), *Sabotage* (1936), *Young and Innocent* (1937), and *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) - all for Hitchcock - *The Clairvoyant* (1935), *King Solomon's Mines* (1937), *Reap the Wild Wind* (1941, the first of three films for Cecil B. DeMille), *Ivy* (1947), *The Curse of the Demon* (1958), and *The Lost World* (1960, one of four films for producer Irwin Allen). CB also directed two films, both of them scripted by himself: *Madness of the Heart* (1949) and *No Escape* (1950).

We express our gratitude to John Bennett, both for making available to our website excerpts from his father's memoirs - which still await a publisher despite their obvious enormous interest to film scholars and historians, Hitchcock buffs and the general reader - and for sending us the following lists of film and/or script titles on which CB worked between 1929

and 1933, here published for the first time. A word of explanation is in order. CB is quoted in Patrick McGilligan's 'Backstory: Interviews With Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age' (1986) as saying he 'was under contract to British International from 1929 to 1930'. Yet the same book contains Bennett's filmography indicating that his first films as (co-)story writer were for independent producer-director of mainly quota quickies, George King, starting in 1931. This note and lists from John Bennett do not entirely clarify the situation, but they do indicate that CB sold stories to BIP from at least as early as May 1931 and that he wrote many others at this time.

Note by John Charles Bennett

My father wrote numerous produced films while under contract to BIP, but those titles are forgotten and the films have disintegrated. Unfortunately, Charles never listed his BIP productions. Perhaps he still considered himself a playwright, or perhaps he was more pleased with his concurrent work for director George King. (In September 1932, King's *Deadlock* - a story constructed by Charles and publicist Billie Bristow - set a British box office record with more than 1400 theatre bookings.) Sadly, film historians who interviewed Charles in his 90s were principally focussed on the Hitchcock connection, and did not ask the ancillary questions - to the detriment of the BIP scripts, which titles he had by now forgotten. Nonetheless, Charles did preserve many notebooks, treatments, synopses, and draft scripts from this period - among which I have found the numerous titles listed below. I vividly remember Charles' saying his BIP productions included *Fireman, Save My Child!* and *Love My Dog*. Also, I remember his pointing to a 1926-1929 bound set of 'The Union Jack', saying some of his BIP productions derived from that source. ('The Union Jack' was a British magazine, which serialized stories of detective Sexton Blake, pitting him against such villainous characters as Paul Cynos, Satira, and Miss Death - see below.) I have also read publicity clippings and found, for example, that BIP purchased *High Speed* (see Bioscope, 5/20/1931) and *Meet His Majesty*. Charles' original notebooks, story drafts, and diaries are either in my possession, or are stored at the Margaret Herrick Library of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles. In the Herrick Library, too, are Charles' BIP and Gaumont-British contracts. An effort to reassemble the BIP production list from British archives would certainly be a fine scholarly project, and would surely result in Charles' attaining the Guinness record for most produced screenplays.

Possible titles of Charles Bennett BIP films, assembled from Charles Bennett's notebooks

1929?	Riders of the Storm
1929?	The Death Cruise
1930?	What a Night
1930?	Danger Calling
1930?	Meet His Majesty - story bought by BIP
12/1930	The Gipsy Melody
1930?	Masquerade
1931?	Phantom of the Footplate (= High Speed?) - a Sexton Blake story bought by BIP, adapted from 'The Union Jack' #1341
1931?	Channel Tunnel
????	The Bear Envelopes - a story of Moscow under the Soviets
????	The Bird of Passage
????	Danger Street
????	Fireman, Save My Child
????	George Story
????	The King with Sunlight in His Hair
????	Love My Dog
????	Melodrama for Melvilles - a Sexton Blake story
????	Myron
????	New Loves for Old
????	Police Car - co-story with Billie. B. Bristow
????	The Problem of the Mayfair Treasure Hunt (=The Mayfair Treasure Hunt?) - a Sexton Blake story
????	Rhapsody (in Red)
????	Scandal
????	Sentimental Journey
????	Society Wedding
????	The Death Cruise
????	Tonight You're Mine! (=Tonight is Ours) - a CB original screen comedy
????	Vagabond
????	The Wife Speaks
1932?	Next Please
1932?	The Parrot Whistles - a Sexton Blake story
1932?	Chinese Waters
1932?	Sunken Gold
1933?	High Seas (=The Case of the *Marie Celeste*?)

The following is a list of stories from 'The Union Jack' (#s 1185-1367) which attracted CB's interest for possible adaptation. We know he adapted *The Phantom of the Footplate*; perhaps he adapted others as well.

Retribution (11/2/1929, #1359:2ff)
King's Evidence (8/31/1929, #1350:2ff)
The Phantom of the Footplate (6/29/1929, 1341:2ff) - a produced screenplay that went to at least 3 drafts
I Defy (6/8/1929, #1338:2ff)
The Case of the Bradford Dragon (5/4/1929, #1333:2ff)
Are You Paul Cynos? (3/23/1929, #1327:2ff)
Dead Man's Plunder (3/16/1929, #1326:2ff)
The Case of the Hairless Man (3/2/1929, #1324:2ff)
The Book of Death (2/23/1929, #1323:2ff)
The Mystery of the Black Van (12/8/1928, #1312:2ff)
A Million in Gold! (8/25/1928, #1297:2ff)
Tinker's Note Book (10/15/1927, #1252:14-15)
The Trail of the Bandaged Man (10/8/1927, #1251:2ff)
Sexton Blake-Convict (10/1/1927, #1250:2ff)
The Mystery Man of Marl House (9/24/1927, #1249:2ff)
Justice Defiled (9/17/1927, #1248:2ff)

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ODD SPOT: FIRE AT WILL

In Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* (UK, 1935), an already unruly audience in a music hall is suddenly stampeded to the exits when a pistol is fired in their midst. A variant of that scene occurs in one of Hitchcock's first American films, *Saboteur* (1942), when again a gun is fired in a crowded auditorium - the Radio City Music Hall - and further confusion is caused by a character on the auditorium's movie screen firing a gun too. Almost certainly, Hitchcock would have taken legal advice about showing the scene in *Saboteur*. In America, where freedom of speech is enshrined in the Bill of Rights, it is widely thought that the Supreme Court has ruled that citizens do not have the right to shout 'Fire!' in a crowded theatre. Actually, that is false in several respects. The misunderstanding goes back to 1919 when Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes adjudicated in the Supreme Court case of Schenck v. United States. In his summing-up, Justice Holmes merely observed: 'But the character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done. [...] The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic. It does not even protect a man from an injunction against uttering words that may have all the effect of force. [...] The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger [of panic, etc.].' So a prohibition against falsely shouting 'Fire!' in a crowded theatre was not enacted as legislation, but was merely referred to in Justice Holmes's commentary. (Note the word 'falsely': obviously, you could shout 'Fire!' if the theatre were actually ablaze. Also, intentionality is important here: anyone may shout 'Fire!' if it is not intended to create a panic. Thus an actor in a movie is free to speak a line like 'Open fire!' or 'Fire at will!'. By the way, the 1994 movie *Clear and Present Danger* appears to use its title without regard to the original context of Justice Holmes's comments.) Of course, more than twenty years after *Saboteur*, Hitchcock returned to the idea again, when in *Torn Curtain* (1966) he did allow a character, Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman), to shout 'Fire!' in a crowded theatre, with on-screen panic likely to ensue. Perhaps it's signifiucant that the movie is set abroad, in East Germany! [Some material for this 'Odd Spot' comes from the website <www.eclipse.net/~mtngoat/fire.htm>.]

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 18 Twyford Street, Box Hill North, Victoria 3129, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the World Wide Web at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>. We've a Yahoo Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MacGuffin>

Journal of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

Issue No. 29 | January 2004 | ISSN 1035-9001 | $US 5

EDITORIAL

WELCOME, READER, TO THIS 29th issue of 'The MacGuffin'. Despite promises made last time, it arrives very late. But I believe it is a substantial issue, providing stimulus for thought that will be taken up in subsequent issues and hopefully elsewhere. (My article herein called "Basically English", analysing *The Pleasure Garden* and *Family Plot* and asserting the importance of several 'English' qualities in Hitchcock, can be modified or expanded, in whole or in part, for other publications, if anyone out there wants to extend an invitation. I would appreciate the opportunity.) I can say now, though, that our next issue will be the long-promised book reviews issue, and will follow soon.

As for the 'MacGuffin' website (www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin), it continues to attract new readers. I will do my best this year to make some of its content less ephemeral than in the past - for one thing, by expanding the section called 'Selections' (based on items already posted and then taken down again for reasons of space). Also, I'm currently reading a stimulating little book by Grahame Smith (Emeritus Professor of English Studies at the University of Stirling) called 'Dickens and the Dream of Cinema' (2003). It may not be as *original* as its author believes - an earlier book exists that I love, called 'Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance' (1965), by Taylor Stoehr, and which covers similar ground yet is never mentioned by Smith. Nonetheless, I foresee that Smith's book, drawing extensively on concepts and strategies of Walter Benjamin, will provide me (and readers) with a springboard for a year of posts and discussion on the 'MacGuffin' website! Advance 2004!

Smith and I certainly agree that Charles Dickens loved melodrama (see this issue) and took every opportunity to embody its forms and latent insights in his novels. A typically fine passage from Smith's book:

> Dickens understood that the violent contrasts of melodrama, its reliance on coincidence, and its unexpected connections between people and things made it the perfect vehicle for his fictional exploration of the modern world as it was coming into being, above all in its manifestation in urban life. (p. 98)

I wish to thank the people who have contributed in various ways to this issue. Michael Walker is an inveterate attendee at film retrospectives and silent film festivals, as befits his being a splendid critic who for many years has written for 'Movie' (UK) and who is a notable contributor to 'The Movie Book of Film Noir' (1993), for example. He has a Hitchcock book or two coming out soon, including his essays in 'Unknown Hitchcock' edited by Ian Cameron. (Incidentally, 2004 looks like seeing a continuation of the flood of Hitchcock books generally.) Michael has written "Antecedents of Hitchcock: two unlikely candidates" which appears below.

Another fine English critic is Philip Kemp, back again in these pages with a book review which is printed below. It originally appeared in the 'Times' Higher Education Supplement, and I thank Philip for making it available. I also want to thank Inge Pruks whose alertness sparked the 'Odd Spot' in this issue referring to a possible influence of Samuel Beckett on the soundtrack of *Rear Window*. As for our regular 'team' of critics who contribute 10-best lists to us each year, they are back in this issue (and will be back again next time as we have some catching up to do).

To everyone, good viewing.

Antecedents of Hitchcock: two unlikely candidates

By Michael Walker

IT IS A COMMONPLACE that there are no new stories, merely old ones recycled in different forms and with elements combined in different ways. Filmmakers freely admit that they rework the plots of the past, and it is not difficult to trace common threads and patterns in movies: this is a fundamental feature of, for example, genre studies. Even Hitchcock, a number of whose films are seminal, drew freely on earlier sources, as Ken Mogg stresses throughout 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (Titan Books, London, 1999) and - with reference to *Vertigo* (1958), the film in question here - in his article "The Fragments of the Mirror: *Vertigo* and its Sources" in 'The MacGuffin' #11 and #25. Occasionally, however, one finds antecedents to a particular work which are surprising. In 'Movie' 29/30 (Summer 1982), I argue that, in translating Libbie Block's novel 'Wild Calendar' (1946) into the movie *Caught* (1949), director Max Ophuls and screenwriter Arthur Laurents reworked the story so that it became quite astonishingly similar in structure to that of (one half of) George Eliot's novel 'Daniel Deronda' (1876).

This article looks at two films which, in retrospect, can be seen to have elements which are surprising anticipations of *Vertigo*. The first is a one-reeler directed by Léonce Perret in 1910, a film so obscure that, when it was shown in 2002 at the Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna, it was known only by its Dutch release title, *Het Onvoltooide Portret* (*The Unfinished Portrait*). Bernard Bastide, who co-edited (with Jean A. Gili) - and researched the filmography for - a recent anthology, 'Léonce Perret' (AFRHC & Cinteca di Bologna, 2003), informed me that he had been unable to identify the original French title of the film, which means, in effect, that one cannot be certain that the film - for all its resonances with his other work - was indeed directed by Perret. The other is a relatively well-known Hollywood movie, *The Enforcer*/ *Murder Inc.* (Bretaigne Windust, 1950). But *The Enforcer* is a gangster movie about a police investigation into the organisation known as 'Murder, incorporated': not exactly an obvious source for Hitchcock.

Léonce Perret (1880-1935) is not a widely-known figure in film history. However, with Il Cinema Ritrovato currently showing his films over three successive years (2002-04) and with the publication (albeit, thus far, only in French) of Bastide and Gili's anthology on the writer-director, one trusts that this will change. His most famous film is probably *Le mystère des roches de Kador* (1912), remarkable for its early use of the cinema itself in a psychoanalytical context. In the introductory chapter to 'Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories' (ed. Janet Bergstrom, University of California Press, 1999), Bergstrom herself gives this film pride of place, discussing it in some detail.

As archivists and critics have rediscovered Perret's films, some have commented on their anticipations of Hitchcock. This shows perhaps most strongly in Perret's understanding of the nature of the cinema itself; several of his most distinctive films deal with film-making or film-viewing - *Le mystère des roches de Kador* includes both. In his 1923 version of *Koenigsmark* (much better than Maurice Tourneur's 1935 remake), at the crucial point when the heroine receives the news that her husband has died of sunstroke in Africa, she is actually watching a home movie of him on his African safari. After she has received the news, Perret shows several frames of the home movie in close-up, inviting us to contemplate the husband and his companion as shown in the frames. The close-up is enigmatic, and it is only after the film's twist (which I won't reveal) that we grasp just how sophisticated Perret's use of the film-within-the film has been.

In an essay, "Léonce Perret, le dernier symboliste", in 'Léonce Perret', Dominique Païni mentions how *The Unfinished Portrait* (as I'll call it) is a fascinating anticipation of *Vertigo* (pp 117-8). His account is brief; mine will be a little more detailed, but it is limited by the fact that I've only seen the film once, and am writing now from notes taken over a year ago. Slightly longer, at 369 metres, than a standard one-reeler (200-300 metres), the film begins in a hunting lodge, with Pierre (Marc Mario) painting a portrait of his wife Jeanne (Fabienne Fabrèges, a Perret regular) in her hunting outfit. When they are subsequently out hunting, Pierre embraces Jeanne at the same time as he reaches for his shot-gun, and accidentally discharges it, killing her. Grieving for Jeanne and unable to finish the portrait, he returns to Paris. There in a café he encounters, by chance, Jeanne's double, Madeleine (Fabrèges) and immediately chats her up. But, when he subsequently visits her in her apartment, Jeanne's apparition enters the room (clad, in the manner of movie ghosts, in a white nightie), sees them together on the sofa and recoils. Pierre is disturbed by the apparition, which in effect blocks his romantic advances to Madeleine: he leaves. Subsequently, he invites Madeleine - whose response to the invitation reveals her own romantic hopes - to his apartment, but, when she enters, she observes him at his desk, with Jeanne's letters and looking at her photograph. He doesn't realise that Madeleine is watching him; she doesn't reveal her presence. When he leaves the room, Madeleine - noticing the likeness - compares herself in a mirror with the woman in the photograph. She then makes herself up to look like Jeanne, so that, when Pierre returns, he thinks that she, too, is Jeanne's apparition. She tells him

who she is, but the film ends at this point, with him still unsure how to react to the situation. I assume that the ending is missing.

Even without the coincidence that one of the women in *The Unfinished Portrait* is called Madeleine (albeit the 'wrong' one), the film seems like a summary of key aspects of *Vertigo* (I am assuming that the plot of *Vertigo* is familiar to readers of 'The MacGuffin'). These include: the association of the beloved with a portrait; her 'death' (here, genuine) in an incident which the hero feels is his fault (here, correctly); the grieving hero meeting a woman who, played by the same actress, strongly resembles the dead woman; this woman allowing herself to be transformed (here, transforming herself) out of love for the hero into the dead woman's exact double; the hero's psychic confusion over the identities of the two women. It will be noted, by those who have read the novel on which *Vertigo* was based - 'D'Entre les Morts' (1954) by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac - that there are elements in common here which are not in 'D'Entre les Morts', notably the use of the portrait. Nevertheless, 'D'Entre les Morts' effects the crucial rearticulation of the material which distinguishes *Vertigo* from this early film. In *The Unfinished Portrait*, because (a) the two women, unlike Judy and Madeleine in *Vertigo*, are not the same, and (b) Jeanne appears after her death as a ghost, the story is closer than *Vertigo* to Freud's formulation of "The Uncanny" in his 1919 essay (published in The Pelican Freud Library No. 14, Penguin Books, 1985). It's as if *The Unfinished Portrait* represents a core narrative, dealing with loss, mourning, and the ghost-like terrain of 'the uncanny' which *Vertigo*, following 'D'Entre les Morts', deconstructs. The material of the uncanny is certainly present in *Vertigo*, but it is re-presented as illusion: a ghost-like 'possession' (of Madeleine by Carlotta Valdez) is exposed as a masquerade; a double is revealed to be a fraud; the supernatural turns out to be a fiction, crafted and staged by a murderer, Gavin Elster.

Dominique Païni suggests that the plot of *The Unfinished Portrait* evokes that of the symbolist novel, 'Bruges-la-morte' (1892) by Georges Rodenbach; on 'The MacGuffin' website, Ken Mogg has made the same suggestion concerning Rodenbach's novel and *Vertigo*. It is indeed likely that behind many works - literary and cinematic - there is a lineage, stretching back to a seminal work (or works) in the past. Nevertheless, the use of the portrait in the two films is not in either 'D'Entre les Morts' or 'Bruges-la-morte' (I am going on the synopsis on 'The MacGuffin' website), so that another thread is in play here. Those intrigued by the (in fact, very common) association of a portrait with death in both literature and film are referred to a special edition of the bilingual (French and English) magazine 'Iris', (No. 14-15, Autumn 1992) devoted to "The Painted Portrait in Film" (and edited by Dominique Païni and Mark Vernet): see, especially, the articles in the issue by Thomas Elsaesser and Susan Felleman.

The Enforcer has a special status in Hitchcock's work: it makes an appearance in one of his films. In *I Confess* (1953) as Father Michael Logan (Montgomery Clift) walks the streets of Quebec, trying to decide whether to give himself up to the police for a murder he did not commit, he passes a cinema showing the film, and looks at - and reacts to - a publicity still (in the cinema's display) showing a man in handcuffs flanked by two police officers. It was my sense that the depicted still does not refer to a scene in *The Enforcer* (it doesn't) that led me to rewatch the film.

One reason why Hitchcock might have been happy to include this particular film in one of his own is as a tribute to Robert Burks: *The Enforcer* was the film Burks made as director of photography immediately before *Strangers on a Train* (1951), i.e., it was his last film before he began his long period of association with Hitchcock. It is also a film of contested authorship: filmographies today routinely record that Raoul Walsh had a hand in the film's direction. The only source I have traced for this story is an interview with Martin Rackin, the film's scriptwriter, in 'Présence du Cinema' 14 (June 1962). Since this is not a readily available source, I'll quote what Rackin said: 'I wrote the script of a film called *The Enforcer*, which is perhaps my best scenario. The direction was credited to Bretaigne Windust, a young theatre director from Broadway. After several days, he was evidently so weak and incapable that Walsh was summoned. He directed the entire film, giving it its violence and brutality' (p 12).

But this 'violent and brutal' film, too, turns out to have elements which anticipate *Vertigo*. In this case, the elements are fragments rather than a complete story, but they are intriguing. As in *Vertigo*, the hero is associated with the police (here, he's the assistant DA), and is called Ferguson (Humphrey Bogart). The opening scenes depict Ferguson's attempts to keep a terrified mobster, Rico (Ted de Corsia), from being killed so that he can testify against Mendoza (Everett Sloane), the head of 'Murder Incorporated', an organisation of professional killers. Ferguson fails: in his fear, Rico attempts to escape from police custody by climbing out of a high window, and when he changes his mind and tries to return to safety, Ferguson is unable to hold on to him, and he slips, falling to his death. Although the man falling to his death on the hero's account occurs at the end of the first act, rather than the first scene (as in *Vertigo*), it is similarly devastating for the hero. In *Vertigo*, its effect is psychological: Scottie Ferguson's vertigo haunts the rest of the movie. In *The Enforcer*, the impact on the hero is professional: with no witnesses left to testify against him, Mendoza will walk free tomorrow.

In both films, then, the fall and death mark a rupture, and the scenes which follow have a different feel. The ensuing narrative in *Vertigo* explores Scottie's psychological state: the scenes have an oneiric feel, as if Hitchcock is suggesting that the narrative should be read not realistically but as expressing the inner world of his hero. The ensuing events in *The Enforcer* are, by contrast, *narratively* complex. As Ferguson and the investigating police officer Nelson (Roy Roberts) review the evidence against Mendoza, the film moves first into flashback, then into a series of flashbacks within the main flashback, as different characters tell their own stories. This is not a character's inner world, but a narrative of past events. However, because the events are presented in the order in which they came to the attention of the police, in narrative terms, they function, rather, as the pieces of a puzzle which (a) have to be fitted together to form a coherent chronology and (b) are sifted through to find a detail which doesn't fit, which could lead to an unexplored avenue.

Vertigo, too, depicts a murder mystery, but Scottie does not grasp this until close to the end, when he suddenly realises that Madeleine and Judy, her 'romantic replacement' are in fact the same woman. And the crucial piece of evidence that 'doesn't fit' in *The Enforcer* also concerns a woman's identity: Ferguson realises that the gangsters have confused two women, and murdered the wrong one. A connection here with *Vertigo* may seem tenuous, but, crucially, in a statement to Ferguson and Nelson, the woman left alive, who now calls herself Teresa Davis (Pat Joiner), gives the murdered woman her own past identity - as Angela Vetto - as a way of warding off her anxiety that she should have been the victim. (As a child, Angela and her father witnessed a murder by Mendoza: hence his concern to have them both tracked down and killed.) In other words, Teresa/Angela quite consciously attempts to 'switch pasts' (in effect, identities) with the murdered woman in order to hide her own past. And in the first half of *Vertigo*, Judy impersonates the real Madeleine Elster, who thus - in some sense - dies in her place. There is a similar 'point of disturbance' here. In *The Enforcer*, one woman is killed in place of another, and the latter retrospectively attempts to bestow on the victim her own past identity. In *Vertigo*, one woman assumes the identity of another, in order that the latter can be murdered without anyone realising that it is murder. In both films, the woman left alive knows that she is assumed to be dead, which causes her a great deal of anxiety. And in both films, the hero is in the dark, struggling to disentangle fact from fiction. The details are different, but the inner core of the stories is strangely similar.

Perhaps it is simply coincidence that there are these echoes of *The Enforcer* in *Vertigo*. But, I am certain that Hitchcock, working at Warner Bros. when it was made there, would have seen the film (not least because it is, in effect, advertised in *I Confess*), and it is possible that certain elements stuck in his mind, to be reworked later during the development of *Vertigo*. Nor is *Vertigo* the only Hitchcock film to contain elements from *The Enforcer*. The gangsters dispose of the bodies of their victims in a swamp, and, in one scene, we see a station wagon, containing a woman's body, being hauled out of the swamp. Here, quite clearly, is an anticipation of the final shot of *Psycho*.

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BLOOPERS

In 'Odd Spot' last time, in line 6, the phrase 'in a created theatre' should of course have read 'in a crowded theatre'.

Best films of 2002

The view from Down Under!

Here are our three Australian critics' ten-best lists of 2002. (Their lists for 2003 will appear next time.)

Four films received two out of three possible votes, namely, *The Piano Teacher* (Michael Haneke), *Yi Yi* (Edward Yang), *Pollock* (Ed Harris), and *Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch).

Our three critics are: author and film critic Adrian Martin, who co-edits the 'Rouge' website (www.rouge.com.au); Tom Ryan, freelance critic and principal film reviewer for the 'Sunday Age', Melbourne; and Fiona Villella, who co-edits the 'Senses of Cinema' website (www.sensesofcinema.com). I thank them, one and all! (KM)

Adrian's list
Baise-moi (Coralie Trinh Thi and Virginie Despentes, France)
The Piano Teacher (Michael Haneke, Austria)
Yi Yi (Edward Yang, Taiwan)
Pollock (Ed Harris, USA)
Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, USA)
Bully (Larry Clark, USA)
Italian for Beginners (Lone Scherfig, Denmark)
The Devil's Backbone (Guillermo del Toro, Mexico/Spain/USA)
8 Femmes (François Ozon, Italy/France)
Va Savoir (Jacques Rivette, France/Italy/Germany)

Tom's list
1. Yi Yi
2. The Gleaners And I (Agnes Varda, France)
3. L'emploi du temps/ Time Out (Laurent Cantet, France)
4. Atarnajuat: The Fast Runner (Zacharias Kunuk, Alaska)
5. Ali (Michael Mann, USA)
6. Last Orders (Fred Schepisi, UK)
7. The Piano Teacher
8. Under the Sand (François Ozon, France)
9. Adaptation (Spike Jonze, USA)
10. Pollock

Honorable mentions to The Circle (Jafar Panahi, Iran), The Son's Room (Nanni Moretti, Italy), In the Bedroom (Todd Field, USA), Bloody Sunday (Paul Greengrass, UK), and Mostly Martha (Sandra Nettelbeck, Germany)

Fiona's list
Corpus Callosum (Michael Snow, Canada)
Domestic Violence (Frederick Wiseman, USA)
Dream Work (Peter Tscherkassky, Austria) (short)
Le Fils/ The Son (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, France/Belgium)
Mulholland Drive
Silence...on tourne/ Silence...We're Rolling (Youssef Chahine, France)
The Universal Clock: the Resistance of Peter Watkins (Geoff Bowie, Canada) (documentary)
Unknown Pleasures (Jia Zhang-ke)
Vou para casa/ I'm Going Home (Manoel de Oliveira, Portugal/France)
What Time is it There? (Tsai Ming-liang, Taiwan/France)

With a few not very far behind: L'emploi du temps/ Time Out, Ghost World (Terry Zwigoff, Germany/GB/USA), Baise-moi, Bloody Sunday, Donnie Darko (Richard Kelly, USA), Où gît votre sourire enfoui? (Pedro Costa, France), Sauvage Innocence/ Wild Innocence (Philippe Garrel, France).

BOOKS REVIEW

What you see, what you 'get'

By Philip Kemp

Durgnat, Raymond: 'A Long Hard Look at *Psycho*' (BFI Publishing, 2002; 248 pp; pb)
Moral, Tony Lee: 'Hitchcock and the Making of *Marnie*' (Manchester University Press, 2003; 215pp; pb)

RAYMOND DURGNAT, WHO DIED recently, was one of the liveliest, most stimulating and, sometimes, most infuriating of film critics. His mind, ceaselessly enquiring and inventive, sparked off ideas, insights and pan-cultural cross-references ad lib, so that his writing is scattered with a restless patchwork of speculative parentheses, often upholstered with question-marks. Untrammelled by orthodoxy or dogmatism, he valued exploration far above consistency, and would quite happily turn around and demolish his own argument just to see where the volte-face might lead. At times his questing, impressionistic style of criticism could turn frustratingly nebulous, but an irrepressible joy in the infinite potentials of cinema and its processes always shone through. In an obituary tribute in 'Film Comment' Richard Combs wrote: 'Durgnat hardly ever seemed to operate in the realm of first-person opinion but instead mined an amplitude of possible responses to, and meanings within, a film.'

'A Long Hard Look at *Psycho*' was Durgnat's last book, completed shortly before his death (although a collection of his essays is promised). It's also one of his best. In terms of format, it might at first sight seem surprisingly predictable for such an unconventional writer. In the traditional style of close exegesis, Durgnat examines Alfred Hitchcock's film scene by succeeding scene, from the opening credits to the final shot. But as always with this critic, what matters is less what he does than the way that he does it. Operating very much after the manner of a director, Durgnat varies his composition and focus – now moving in for the close-up scrutiny of a sequence almost frame-by frame, now pulling back to survey the film's psychological and emotional landscape.

The effect isn't unlike Douglas Gordon's art installation, *24 Hour Psycho*, first presented at the Hayward Gallery in 1996, in which the film is slowed down from its normal 109 minutes to run a full 24 hours. But where Gordon simply holds up each successive frozen frame for our appraisal, giving no greater weight to one than to another, Durgnat's approach homes in on those moments where Hitchcock's mischievous, meticulous exercise in 'playing [the audience] like an organ' (as he provocatively termed it) most cunningly works its effects, and teases out his secrets. In the famous (or infamous) shower scene, of course – but also at less obvious junctures, such as tracing the power-play dynamics underlying the scene where the fugitive Janet Leigh exchanges her car.

This process of subtly arousing our apprehension, Durgnat makes clear, starts right in with *Psycho*'s credits, where Saul Bass's slithering geometric title design and the stabbing violins of Bernard Herrmann's strings-only score combine to unsettle the audience before a single image has appeared on screen. Durgnat's account of this credit sequence is a tour-de-force of description in itself: 'Against the last [black] bands, streaking across at middle height, white angular flecks appear, like enigmatic signs, and turn out to be the tips and tails of letters, slashed laterally and vertically disaligned...,'

Hard to imagine, perhaps, that anyone who reads this book won't already have seen *Psycho*, probably several times – but if there are any such readers, they'll surely be sent scurrying to their nearest video store, their curiosity intolerably piqued. Meanwhile, those of us who know the film well will want to sit through it again, if only to check our perceptions against Durgnat's. Time and again he prods our imagination with his insights – as often as not in casual *aperçus* with only tangential bearing on the subject at hand. 'By and large,' he remarks at one point, 'a film is like an iceberg: What You See Is a Lot Less Than What You Get. ("Get" in the American sense – "to intuitively understand"...)'. Or, comparing Anthony Perkins with other Hitchcock leading men, 'From a certain angle, he's not so far from Cary Grant; but where Grant slid lightly and politely over everything, like a mildly irascible eel, Perkins put more depth, thoughtful or disturbing, into every role.' I suspect I shall never again be able to view Cary Grant in quite the same light.

It's Tony Lee Moral's ill luck that his book on *Marnie*, Hitchcock's next-but-one film after *Psycho*, should have appeared in the wake of Durgnat's idiosyncratic, illuminating study. At any time Moral's book would have made a fairly modest splash in the overstocked pool of literary Hitchockiana, but set beside Durgnat his staid, conscientious account appears particularly drab. Unlike *Psycho*, which after some initial shrieks of synthetic outrage from the reviewers was rapidly recognised as one of Hitchcock's greatest films, *Marnie* has always been the subject of controversy: Hitch's last major film, or the onset of his decline?

In his introduction Moral makes grand proposals towards tackling this and other cruxes associated with the film, although his stiff academic phraseology ('I will cite why...', 'I will highlight multivocality...', 'I will unequivocally argue...') already arouses misgivings. In the event he largely sidesteps most of the more problematic aspects of the film, or ignores the contradictions of his own material. Much debate around *Marnie* has centred on the blatantly painted backdrops and crude back-projections used in several scenes, often cited as evidence of Hitchcock's growing indifference to technical matters. Moral concludes that Hitchcock was deliberately aiming for an expressionist, non-naturalistic effect, but his argument is undermined by the testimony he cites (from the film's assistant director James Brown) that a huge and much-derided backdrop of a docked liner was carefully designed to look convincing from the planned high camera angle – which Hitchcock then impulsively changed at the last minute.

For the rest, Moral plods dutifully through all the stages of the film's production, interviewing most of the survivors – actors and crew - as he goes. Much of this is informative, though Moral's clumsy, inelegant style hardly helps. (Nor do some elementary howlers – at one point we're introduced to a German film-maker called Weiner Fassbinder.) The debate over *Marnie* will undoubtedly continue; this study provides useful primary material, but it's a long way from concluding the argument.

[This review was originally published last year in the 'Times' Higher Education Supplement.]

Hitchcock's *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) and *Family Plot* (1976): basically English

By Ken Mogg

'Here's wishing Jill something greater than fame - happiness.'
- Patsy, in *The Pleasure Garden*

'In the end there will be happiness. From the tears of the past, the desert of the heart will bloom.'
- 'Henry', in *Family Plot*

Introduction to both films: beyond 'fakery'?

WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN essay on Hitchcock's 'Englishness' incorporating an analysis of his first and his last films. Or perhaps the other way about. At all events, I'll be drawing extensively on two studies: J.B. Priestley's 'The English' (1973) and Peter Ackroyd's 'Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination' (2002). Neither work mentions Hitchcock, though he of course admired Priestley's writing[1] and employed him to provide 'additional dialogue' for *Jamaica Inn* (1939). Significantly, both Priestley and Ackroyd wrote biographies of England's greatest novelist, Charles Dickens (1812-70). I'll have things to say below about the schoolboy Hitchcock's reading of both Dickens and the poet John Milton (1608-74). As Ackroyd notes, Milton and Dickens were 'visionaries', and I see nothing fanciful in applying such a term to Hitchcock too. I'll also be comparing below Hitchcock and Dickens as 'melodramatists'. Crucially, I believe Hitchcock's films, like Dickens's novels, to be full of 'life', or 'Will', that is, a life-force that is also a death-force. Dickens wrote: 'I am always deeply sensible of the wonderful exercise I have of life and its highest sensations.' For Hitchcock's part, I believe that he came to see 'pure film' as analogous to Will.

The titles sequence of *The Pleasure Garden* consists of a double-exposure done in the camera.[2] The credits occupy one part of the screen, a female dancer another. She is gyrating and shimmying with gusto, a spotlight shining down on her. Despite the use here of a *cinematic* technique, the immediate reference is unmistakeably to the *theatre* and to *life*. The slanting beam of the spotlight anticipates the dynamic titles for *Young and Innocent* (1937), another of Hitchcock's films to draw, with Shakespeare, the lesson, 'All the world's a stage'.[3] Equally, the dancer's energy anticipates the credits sequence of the suitably-named *Lifeboat* (1944), featuring a sinking ship's funnel in which the flame of the boiler can be seen still burning[4] ...

That dancer, significantly, is Jill, the film's ambitious, star-struck 'bad girl'. Her fortunes will increasingly oppose those of the heroine Patsy, destined to stay in the chorus until marriage takes her away. In several respects *The Pleasure Garden* anticipates *The Ring* (1927). For one thing, the titles sequence of the latter shows a distant, lit-up boxing ring at the Albert Hall. Surrounded by near-invisible watchers, the ring suggests destiny and, indeed, the contending nature of Will itself.[5] Also, the image is a *theatrical* one. Secondly, both *The Pleasure Garden* and *The Ring* desist from judging

their respective characters though remaining clear-eyed about moral issues. Tough-minded Jill will probably stay afloat for years in the particular London society she has been privileged to enter (though it isn't the *highest* society); roughly speaking, her counterpart in *The Ring* is Bob Corby, the devil-may-care boxing champion who finally loses both the girl Mabel and the prize-fight to his rival Jack. At the end, you feel that Bob will pick himself up and carry on his life regardless. Here's how I describe him in 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (1999):

> But Hitchcock appears to bear no malice towards the worldly Bob. During the title-fight, Bob is depicted as the total professional - at one point the helps Jack to his feet after the bell. When the fight ends, Bob gives Mabel a wry smile and nods acknowledgment of his (double) defeat.[6]

In much of this I sense an affinity of Hitchcock to both a philosopher, the German Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and to the great English caricaturist and engraver William Hogarth (1697-1764). There's nothing esoteric in my reasoning, I think. On the basis of Schopenhauer's understanding that all creatures, great and small, are subject to blind Will, he arrived at an ethical and aesthetic worldview. I happen to believe that it comes close to Hitchcock's. Likewise, apropos Hogarth, Peter Ackroyd notes that much British 'low' humour has a 'levelling' intent[7] (and we know from reports that Hitchcock was a deft exponent of such humour, not to mention a connoisseur of Hogarth's work).[8] That leads Ackroyd to make this observation about such Hogarths as 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane':

> Here dwell incongruity and difference but, curiously, in the light and atmosphere of London they are for a moment united. It may be wrong, then, to conclude that London artists are not capable of profundity.[9]

In such a context, I find significant Patricia Hitchcock's testimony: 'I became aware as I got older that my parents were never judgmental of others'.[10]

Next, some introductory remarks about *Family Plot*. In several ways, it resembles *The Pleasure Garden*. The worldly ambition of kidnapper 'Eddie Shoebridge'/'Arthur Adamson' and his partner Fran contrasts with the 'muddling through' of kooky Blanch, a medium, and her boyfriend George. Blanche is thus the equivalent of the suitably named Patsy in *The Pleasure Garden*. Neither woman is particularly sophisticated and each is a typical Hitchcock heroine in having a lot of the would-be mother about her. In fact, I intend to show that both films pivot on the maternal instinct which, along with the sex instinct, is a key manifestation of Will in living creatures. Not unrelated to the maternal instinct for Hitchcock was his ingrained Romanticism, and that's something else I'll be discussing below. For now, I think it sufficient to say that Blanche's excursions in a 'fake' spirit-world, plumbing even what she calls the 'outer darkness', are in some tour-de-force way the equivalent of the idyllic Lake Como sequence in *The Pleasure Garden*. Both films are about seeking to make the 'fake' authentic.

Further, both films are notable for sophisticated cross-cutting. By 1925, Hitchcock and his screenwriter Eliot Stannard were moving beyond Griffith's cross-cutting for narrative suspense à la *Intolerance* (1916) and were using the technique to make particular points. Here's an instance. Patsy, at home, relaxed in a cardigan, first meets Hugh, neatly dressed in a suit, when he comes to visit his fiancée Jill. Straight away the pair feel at ease with each other. When Patsy mentions that Jill has gone to a costume fitting, Hitchcock cuts to a title, 'The "try-on"', then to a showroom where an *exotically-dressed* Jill strikes a pose. On the right of screen, a fluttering male couturier undrapes his arm from the shoulder of Jill's boss Hamilton and attends to her. Next, Hitchcock cuts again to Patsy and Hugh enjoying afternoon tea, and then back to Jill and Hamilton also taking tea but amidst the showroom's *ornate* surroundings. And so on.

In the case of *Family Plot*, its now veteran director asked Edith Head to design four 'levels' of costume.[11] Adamson and Fran were to be seen as figures of fashion (cf Jill), George and Blanche as workaday (cf Patsy), wealthy Julia Rainbird as fastidious (cf Jill's wealthy suitors), and a figure like Blanche's client Ida Cookson as dowdy (cf Patsy's landlord and landlady, Mr and Mrs Sidey). It thus became quite easy for cross-cutting to hinge on the contrasts of the different milieus. From George in his cab-driver's uniform listening over his shoulder to Blanche in the back seat recount how the séance with Julia Rainbird has just gone, the camera (momentarily inhabiting a *literal* 'outer darkness') now suddenly swoops down to show Fran crossing in front of them on her way by foot to collect a ransom diamond from the Police Aviation Academy. Fran is wearing high boots, a broad-shouldered trench coat, and a long blonde wig for disguise. Shortly she will join Adamson in his car and tell him how the escapade with the diamond has just gone ...

In sum, both films range freely across their respective societies, being not unlike a Dickens novel in that respect. *Family Plot* is almost quaint in the way that it gradually draws together its hitherto separate plot strands (cf 'Bleak House', 1853) though the matter of a wealthy family's hidden shame is disclosed at the outset and not held back for the climax. Depicting a cross-section of society became in fact a regular device of Hitchcock's: as he said pragmatically of *Rear*

Window (1954), it wouldn't have worked as well without the sense of a representative cross-section of people living in the apartments opposite Jeff's.[12] Pointedly, many of those people are shown *suffering* the same everyday frustrations and disappointments that Schopenhauer's theory of Will insists is the very nature of humanity. I would invoke here a phrase of Goethe's - 'the dignity of significance' - while being mindful, too, of another of Ackroyd's observations, that *Cockney* artists and writers (in particular) are inclined to all-inclusiveness. 'There are [for example] images in Thomas More's writing', Ackroyd notes, 'which are ... of urban provenance, particularly those of the prison and of the theatre. What better metaphors could ... be chosen to represent the condition of the [whole] city?'[13]

* * *

[T]he pose, or poses, which [the Romantic hero] Byron adopted were 'a logical continuation of the Wordsworthian preoccupation with role'. We revert inevitably to the vocabulary and manner of the stage.
- Peter Ackroyd, "The Romantic Fallacy", in 'Albion' (2002), pp.436-37

Vertigo is a thriller whose subject is Romanticism. Madeleine awakens in Scottie the 'transcendental pretence', the belief that the Self is everything. But when he finally confronts that Self, he finds it treacherous ...
- Ken Mogg, 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (London, 1999), p.146

It is not irrelevant that Robert Browning parodied romantic sentiment through the voice of 'Mr Sludge', a fake spiritualist medium. One critic has discovered, in the narratives of British romanticism, a 'problematical self-consciousness' and a 'division in the self' ...
- Peter Ackroyd, 'Albion', p. 437

Excursion 1: the importance of being theatrical

Hitchcock, I have always insisted, was a Romantic-eclectic director. That is, despite his flights of fancy he was both down-to-earth and pragmatic. And all the more English for it. Take his eclecticism. How well this further observation by Ackroyd fits a filmmaker who once said that '[d]irectors who lose control are concerned with the abstract':[14]

> In English literature, music and painting, heterogeneity becomes the form and type of art. ... The English have in this sense always been a practical and pragmatic race ... This native aptitude has in turn led to disaffection from, or dissatisfaction with, all abstract speculation.[15]

In *The Pleasure Garden*, photographed by Baron Ventimiglia, the first part of the Lake Como sequence is a Romantic idyll. We may discern here a mix of influences: Hitchcock's Catholic faith, his English upbringing, his German training. (No matter that the latter seems in some ways reacted *against*: Lang's *Die Nibelungen*, with its *studio* forests and landscapes, had preceded *The Pleasure Garden* by just a year.) But as the sequence draws to a close, the mood is undercut in a way that would become typical of Hitchcock. Realistically, he shows us how Patsy's dream of happiness is destined to be short-lived or, at best, compromised ...

Romanticism and German Expressionist cinema are associated, of course. However, several English poets and artists at roughly the end of the 18th century had first helped pioneer the new Romantic movement, then had led the way in questioning its excesses and darker aspects. I want to highlight one of those aspects. Robert C. Solomon calls it 'the transcendental pretence'.[16] The fact is that even as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was proclaiming that all knowledge and goodness await discovery within, and that the individual Self is also the self of all humanity,[17] Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was concluding that the human mind is forever barred from knowing 'ultimate' truth. That is, the transcendental pretence had already been found wanting. Yet, as Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) goes to show, it would take at least a century and a half before we could see fully what was involved. Pursuing the mysterious 'eternal-feminine' figure, Madeleine/Judy, the hitherto 'hard-headed' Scottie effectively embarks on a Faustian quest to find 'the key'[18] that will free the two of them from the bonds of time and space (and causal interconnection). In other words, Scottie's wish to *ascend*, to make it up the church tower, is no mere phallic motif but rather the transcendental pretence itself. Here, then, is Robert Solomon's critique of that (very wilful) entity:

> It appeared as innocence and common sense, but it embodied a profound arrogance that promoted self-righteousness, prohibited mutual understanding, and belied human diversity. Fully developed, the transcendental pretence has two central components: first, the remarkable inner richness and expanse of the self, ultimately

> encompassing everything; and secondly, the consequent right to project from the subjective structures of one's own mind, and ascertain the nature of humanity as such.[19]

'It is suggestive', adds Solomon, 'that the transcendental pretence was discovered by a sociopath, free and alone with his self-aggrandizement'.[20] Scottie in *Vertigo* seems increasingly such a sociopath, and he lives alone. And his ambition to be Chief of Police is ambiguous. It certainly *could* suggest an urge for self-aggrandizement. In turn, that may have been what led Midge to break off their engagement back in college days.

Now, something very like the transcendental pretence (or its mindset), what Keats called 'the Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime', has been critiqued recently in Althusserian terms:

> With the romantic centre interpellating the romantic poet into an enabling position, and the entire interpellary relationship being reflected in the [poetic] landscape, the universe appeared unified but it was an illusion. Because any ideology necessarily creates a cultural unconscious, or that which is not allowed in that ideology's imaginative representation of the world, there can be no universal consciousness.[21]

Quite so. But precisely because we can't know 'ultimate' truth, there remains room for Romantic hope. ('In the end there will be happiness' intones 'Henry' in *Family Plot*.) And certainly for panache. Which brings me to my argument of the next few pages. Hitchcock, I believe, had a wonderful facility to straddle interior and exterior 'worlds', and to be both introvert and extravert. Allied to this was how he seemed always to understand the importance of theatricality, role-playing, in everyday life. Thus provided, he was able to eat his cake and keep it too. That is, he retained his Romantic 'vision' while being capable of critiquing it and of avoiding most of its dangers. (The same can not be said of Scottie in *Vertigo*.) I like to think that he chose intuitively to out-Wordsworth Wordsworth when it came to this broad matter of theatricality, and that he emerged the better for it as a compassionate, perceiving individual.

This is not a simple matter (though my argument is). I ask the reader to keep in mind my point about Hitchcock straddling two worlds, roughly 'interior' and 'exterior', and my sense that 'theatricality' was something that he held to be literally vital. Palpably, Scottie's tragedy in *Vertigo* is that he fails in these respects. Indeed, the original novel, 'D'Entre les Morts' (1954), depicts Scottie as a failed 'artist' and one whose feelings of guilt after Madeleine 'dies' are described thus: 'It was will-power he lacked ... He would have had to pour out far more vitality than he possessed to keep her in this world.'[22] A similar motif runs through the *film* - except that it has been displaced, by a form of dream logic, onto Midge with her shallow commercial designs.

Of course, 'theatricality' involves much more than energy or the life-force. I see good reason to think that Hitchcock was influenced by writer and playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) who in turn was influenced by the ethical worldview of the philosopher Schopenhauer. Pirandello, who in his family had known insanity, developed in his plays a form of 'pure theatre' that was also 'psycho-drama'. The title of his most famous work, 'Six Characters in Search of an Author' (1921), intimates how the play is about a group of despairing people who yet hope to be redeemed by an act of *performance*. In Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* (1935), the character Mr Memory is like a Pirandellian character. Sadly, his life has revolved around just 'facts' - fifty new ones to be learned every day - and his death in the wings of a theatre is ironic, especially as he dies with a plaintive question to Hannay who has just been through a 'quickening' process in the real world that is quintessential Hitchcock.[23] (Hannay's descendent, Roger Thornhill, in *North by Northwest* [1959] will say near the end of that film, 'I never felt more alive!') 'Am I right, sir?' he asks, and an audience cannot miss how the answer may indeed redeem him. 'Quite right, old man', responds Hannay, generously ...

Here, Hitchcock may have had in mind the title of another Pirandello play, 'Right You Are (If You Think So)', which had its first London performance in 1925, when it starred Claude Rains. The title is not cynical but rather indicates the play's wise compassion (such as Hannay shows Mr Memory). Tellingly, the play ends to the accompaniment of ringing laughter, a comment on the assumption by some of its characters (and its audience) that truth is simple and knowable.

Does that not sound familiar, fellow Hitchcockians? It should do, for Hitchcock appears to have borrowed the effect to end the sound version of *Blackmail* (1929). There, the ringing laughter is accompanied by a jester's finger pointing directly at us, the audience. How very theatrical! Much of the later Hitchcock is surely in that moment: for example, the scene in *The Birds* (1963) where an hysterical mother breaks the 'fourth wall' of an invisible stage and addresses the camera with her accusation, 'I think you're evil!' Undeniably, there *is* a sort of cynicism here, and I would describe the moment as pure Schopenhauer (as well as pure Pirandello).[24] But it's Hitchcock's *own* theatricality that I want to discuss now.

Amongst British intellectuals in the 1920s it was widely held, with Nietzsche, that 'most people are dead'. So reports John Carey in his book 'The Intellectuals and the Masses' (1994). Hitchcock was influenced by the prevailing attitude, possibly from mixing with his fellow members of the London Film Society. In *Rich and Strange* (1932) he depicted a drab suburban couple, Fred and Emily, living in one of several identical row-houses. It comes as no surprise to hear Fred complaining at the start, 'I want more life - life, I tell you!' Another organisation to which Hitchcock belonged in the 1920s was the informal Hate Club which discussed (often with animosity) those elements of society that interfered with art and artistic cinema. Given Hitchcock's early bad experiences with distributor C.M. Woolf, one readily understands his apparently life-long distrust, and even fear, of such front-office types. Accordingly, he seems to have always seen himself as surrounded by death-dealers. How, then, was he best to safeguard his artistic 'vision'?

There are several answers to that question. One is 'cunning'. Another is what director Richard Franklin (*Psycho II*) on the 'MacGuffin' website recently called Hitchcock's 'chutzpah'. And yet another, but related, answer is most certainly 'theatricality'. Numerous anecdotes tell of Hitchcock's resort to 'drama' in his everyday life, from his smashing of a cup at every tea break, to his often notorious practical jokes, to his celebrated 'lift story' (which so bemused Peter Bogdanovich). What these anecdotes invariably neglect to mention is the vital reason for such drama on Hitchcock's part. I believe it concerns his endeavour at all costs to keep his 'vision' *alive* and to beat off the death-dealers. No settling into a rut for *him*, contra Fred and Emily in *Rich and Strange* or characters in certain Buñuel films ...

I want to continue being anecdotal for a moment. On at least one occasion - though I forget when and where - Hitchcock told an interviewer that as an inveterate theatre-goer all of his life, he had been careful never to lose his 'innocence'. He explained that by this he meant that he had refrained from concerning himself with behind-the-scenes matters of staging, the private lives of the performers, etc., so as to better surrender to the onstage illusion. This, from a master of *cinematic* staging! It is a telling instance of Hitchcock's belief in literal mind-over-matter and one that surely bears directly on his battle with the death-dealers to uphold his (Romantic) vision. Further, consider how he chose to appear in a prologue of *The Wrong Man* (1957) rather than in the film proper. As I noted in 'The MacGuffin' #20, the prologue is set on a deserted soundstage - deserted, that is, except for Hitchcock's backlit figure - whose visual expressionism links it to the equally shadowy and bleak New York of Manny Balestrero's story. And what we see in that latter place is *suffering* and un-freedom (the very place, in effect, that Scottie in Hitchcock's next film is seeking to 'transcend'), much as we've noted already in *Rear Window*. By filming himself in the prologue in this way, you could say that Hitchcock was asserting how (his kind of) an artist is *in* the world but not wholly *of* it. Alternatively, you could read the prologue as saying, 'There but for the grace of God, go I'.[25] Which brings me to Hitchcock's affinity with another Cockney visionary, John Milton.

For the book 'Dark Thoughts: Philosophic Reflections on Cinematic Horror' (2003), I recently elaborated my conviction that not only does Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) allude verbally to Milton's famous sonnet known as 'On His Blindness' but itself employs Miltonic imagery. Notably, it likens Marion Crane and her sister Lila to 'angels' who lack the 'patience' to 'wait'. (The words just quoted all come, in the first instance, from Milton's sonnet.) Both sisters are given visual 'markers' that denote their 'angelic' status: Marion a halo-like shower-nozzle, Lila an 'effulgence' of garden rakes. Those images in turn relate to others such as the painting in Norman Bates's parlour of angels ascending into Heaven. We also hear such key lines as 'Patience doesn't run in my family, Sam' (spoken by Lila). But of course in Milton's sonnet the poet is not comparing himself to just *any* angels, and certainly not the common or garden variety that 'post o'er land and ocean without rest'! Rather, he thinks of himself, afflicted by blindness but still planning to write 'Paradise Lost', as like the *highest* angelic order, those who 'also serve' though they 'only stand and wait' (where 'wait' has the two senses of 'stay expectant' and 'attend'). It is a beautiful conceit on Milton's part - and I use that term advisedly! - which I believe *Psycho*'s director has in turn appropriated to himself, though perhaps not without a sense of irony. That is, I think that Hitchcock in *Psycho* is silently affirming his own feeling of being *graced* as an artist.

I hasten to elaborate. First, the connection to the prologue of *The Wrong Man* is both more direct and more worked out in *Psycho* than I have shown so far. Milton in his sonnet speculates momentarily whether he must not now turn to 'day-labour' like a common hired hand, then hears a personified Patience telling him that such thinking is needless and foolish. 'There but for the grace of God go I' is again the message. Further, the poet's distinction between two orders of angels effectively draws the same fine line between himself and others as Hitchcock does with his prologue. I'm reminded that John Steinbeck, who worked with Hitchcock on *Lifeboat*, considered the director a real English snob!

On the other hand, *Psycho* seems to imply that Marion Crane may not have died unredeemed. (Again one remembers the death of Mr Memory in *The 39 Steps*.) Such a reading is certainly consistent with Catholic doctrine. A recent article, "The Catholic Vision in Hollywood", by María Elena de las Carreras Kuntz, observes: 'The Catholic understanding ... is that human nature is weakened by original sin but capable of redemption through the exercise of free will.'[26] Hence perhaps the importance in *Psycho* of the moment when Marion sits down to reckon how much of the stolen $40,000 she

has spent and will need to make up. At this instant she comes closest to the poet of the sonnet who speaks of 'my soul more bent' to present to God 'my true account'. Equally, she may here come closest to earning the sympathy of her 'director' who is nonetheless watching over her story impartially, without judgement.

This again is a beautiful conceit, not unconnected with theatricality. 'All the world's a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players.' For reasons why Hitchcock would have identified himself with the poet of 'On His Blindness' I refer the reader to my article in the book 'Dark Thoughts'. What I would like to note here is further evidence that has occurred to me since that article was written, supporting its claims. For a start, we know that Hitchcock was very capable of loading a screenplay with symbolic meanings, if sometimes at the last minute. Writing on *Strangers on a Train* (1951), Donald Spoto tells of how its inspired profusion of 'doubles' imagery was 'quite deliberately added by Hitchcock' in notes dictated during final script preparation.[27] As for Milton's poem itself, I have come to realise that in all probability Hitchcock as a boy had to learn it by rote at his Jesuit school in London. Few poems more likely, in fact! Some of its concepts seem to have stayed with him all of his life. When he received the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1979, he chose in his brief acceptance speech to suggest that 'this is what happens to good little boys'. (After all, his father, seemingly ignorant of original sin, had once called him 'my little lamb without a spot'.) In perhaps questionable taste, he added that he might otherwise have been found elsewhere in the room serving as one of the 'slower waiters'. The essential imagery and the pun are surely Milton's, right down to the contrast with the *lesser* 'waiters' from whom Hitchcock chose to differentiate himself.

As for the shower-nozzle in *Psycho* to which I have attributed halo-like properties - consistent with the 'angels' imagery and symbolism in surrounding scenes - I would note that halo-imagery was literally on Hitchcock's mind that year. Watching recently the Hitchcock-directed episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' called "Mrs Bixby and the Colonel's Coat" (aired 27 September 1960), I was amused by Hitchcock's introduction. Depending on how glowingly he spoke of his sponsor, a halo (identical in size to the *Psycho* shower-nozzle) would appear or disappear above his head.

I must now try to bring my argument full circle. Hamming-it-up, or a form of theatricality, was one of Hitchcock's ways of safeguarding his 'vision' that was already inherent in his first film, *The Pleasure Garden*. I would say that it was a two-fold vision (at least), being Romantic at the core but hedged around with a keen sense of how the world goes. In the Lake Como sequence, Hitchcock momentarily indulged his yearning for the 'lost paradise', the original 'pleasure garden' denied us since the Fall. As I'll discuss below, the scene actually gives us a snake-in-the-grass: the villainous Levet, reclining in a banded jumper on a turfy hillside, beyond which may be seen a phallic tower.

Rather than be a death-dealer himself, I like to think that Hitchcock chose to follow Somerset Maugham's admittedly ambiguous dictum: 'Only the artist, and maybe the criminal, can make his own life.' The artist in turn might help others to live. In 1936, Hitchcock did indeed write that it was the cinema's role to provide good healthy 'shake-ups' to audiences whose sheltering civilisation threatened to make them 'sluggish and jellified'.[28] Nor, he evidently felt, had very much changed by 1975 when he made *Family Plot*. As Adamson had foreseen, the kidnapping of the Archbishop from St Anselm's Cathedral goes off without a hitch. 'I told you it would be all right, didn't I?' Adamson asks Fran. 'People in church are inhibited. They don't jump up and make noises and run around. They're all too religiously polite.' In short, this scene accepts Nietzsche's premise that organised religion (if not society at large) is stultifying. It is Hitchcock's equivalent of the final scene of Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962).

I have two further observations to make at this stage. The first concerns Blanche, the medium, in *Family Plot*. Hitchcock's attitude to her is divided, in keeping with the whole 'straddling two worlds' stance he always adopted. On the one hand, he had no hesitation in calling her (in a trailer) 'very definitely a fake'. What I think he meant by that is not just that Blanche isn't all she claims to be but that she isn't exceptional. She is neither truly religious nor truly Romantic, and yet she is a bit of both (as we'll see). And in being that much, she fits the critique of the contemporary 1970s world that *Family Plot* perhaps inadvertently offers. As I said before, Blanche is basically another Patsy, another 'slower waiter' if you will. Yet, on the other hand, she is made to carry the bulk of the viewer's sympathies. Her likeableness is palpable. So what exactly is she doing in Hitchcock's film?

Hitchcock originally saw Blanche as a Madame Arcati-like figure as played by the highly theatrical Margaret Rutherford in the stage and film versions of Noël Coward's 'Blithe Spirit' (1941;1945).[29] Madame Arcati in turn was originally to have been played by Coward's friend, the writer and actress 'Clemence Dane' (Winifred Ashton), whom Hitchcock had met when he was preparing to film *Murder!* (1930).[30] He seems to have been taken with this sociable, if eccentric, woman. If 'most people are dead', she at least was an exception, with a chutzpah matching his own. So I think we can

say that *Blanche* has something of the life-force about her. And with her own natural chutzpah (it may seem), she functions in the film to both critique and affirm Hitchcock's persona of showman-artist. Her wink that ends the film is his. It is benign. It shows a good conscience.

However, my final observation for now concerns the pointing jester in *Blackmail*. I said above that there *is* a degree of cynicism in that final gesture of the film, effectively confirmed later when the hysterical mother in *The Birds* tells us, 'I think you're the cause of all this - I think you're *evil*!' Not much benignity there! But let's not overlook the fact that the woman *is* hysterical and that she receives a sobering slap from Melanie Daniels for her trouble. If the woman had read her Schopenhauer, she would have understood that evil and original sin are the products of Will and that the malign and benign aspects of Will are always intertwined. Further, the moment is *especially* Schopenhauerian because it refers to the *subjective* nature of our viewing films - and everything else. Not for nothing did Schopenhauer begin his *magnum opus* by asserting, 'The world is my representation'.[31] In studying Hitchcock's films, it is fascinating to observe his increasing philosophical sophistication over the years. Nonetheless, I'm convinced that his deepest insights were intuitive, following from his always-held conviction that 'life' is the film medium's essential subject. 'Just so long as it's not dull', the pragmatic side of him would add.

* * *

[T]he English depend more upon instinct and intuition than other West Europeans do. They are not unreasonable, but they are hardly ever strictly rational, and almost always they suspect the closed-in creations of pure rationality: they prefer the open-ended.

- J.B. Priestley, 'The English' (1975 Penguin edition), p. 10

Hitchcock's 'open-ended pessimism'.

- Neil P. Hurley, SJ, 'Soul in Suspense: Hitchcock's Fright and Delight' (1993), p. xiii

If we are to denote a London style, then [exaggeration] is one of its most significant tokens. It suggests aggression, and a measure of latent cynicism, which has never been absent from the city; it reveals also the need to impress, in a milieu where everyone and everything competes to demand attention, as well as an appetite for extravagance and theatricality. These are all qualities which may be traced in the line of Cockney visionaries, no less in Milton and More, Blake and Turner and Dickens, than in Chaucer.

- Peter Ackroyd, 'Albion', pp. 307-08

Excursion 2: 'mastering' the force

Melodrama fitted the liveliest art perfectly. As a form, it was born with Romanticism. Indeed, Jean Jacques Rousseau is credited with authoring one of the earliest, most literal melodramas, 'Pygmalion' (1770), in which music was used to express its sculptor-protagonist's moods, from dejection to elation.[32] Very arguably, the form was a necessary invention, given both Romanticism's emphasis on subjectivity and the altogether new emphasis by poets and thinkers on life as a whole, including the lives of ordinary people. Contrariwise, Schopenhauer's notion of 'Will' is in many respects a Platonic ideal of melodrama applied to the cosmos. The English, with their openness to life, readily took to melodrama. As Ackroyd notes: 'One of the delights of the English theatre has always been its morbid sensationalism, not unconnected with a fascination for the "Gothic" and the grotesque. ... To laugh in the midst of horrors - it is another example of the heterogeneity, that medley of moods, that makes up the English imagination.'[33]

Charles Dickens, loved melodrama and wrote his novels accordingly. He has been called the inventor of the modern 'thriller'[34] but he anticipated Hitchcock in plenty of other ways too. For example, both men took the minutest interest in how their work was perceived by the public - in Dickens's case, down to careful supervision of the illustrations that accompanied his novels, including any visual symbols therein. But it was the very force and rhythm of melodrama that always underlay Dickens's work. In 'Nicholas Nickleby' (1839) there's even a literal melodrama-within-the-melodrama, staged by Mr Crummles and his theatrical troupe and significantly named 'The Mortal Struggle'. In turn, that title echoes a phrase of the Victorians, 'the battle of life', which then provided the title of a Dickens short story.[35] Further, the best of Dickens's novels, like the best of the stage melodramas, might contrive to suggest the quality of open-endedness, for wasn't that the nature of the cosmos itself? The Victorians were not fools, and could see past the requisite happy endings with their multiple marriages, disclosures, etc., to reflect on the stylised form of the genre as a whole. Ackroyd has a related point. With the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's 'The Origin of Species', written in part like a novel and

'essentially a work of fiction', there occurred further 'blurring of boundaries and of genres, so instinct and vital an aspect of the English imagination'.[36]

Of course, the first flush of Romanticism, with its considerable optimism, was well and truly past by the time Dickens came to write his mature novels. Accordingly, his melodramatic 'vision' was always going to be inflected by rather more than just the natural cynicism - not to mention 'levelling' humour - of the Cockney. In episode 12, "Forces of Nature", of Simon Schama's recent 15-part 'A History of Britain' for the BBC, covering the period 1780 to 1832, Schama notes the Romantic vision of Britain as a threatened paradise. The fall of the Bastille initially seemed to point a way forward for Britain, but when the terrifying reality of the French Revolution set in, the patriots turned rather to Nature itself. And even that entity soon palled in the hands of such writers as Dickens. With him, the hopeful figure of *the child* always remained a potential hero (as in 'Oliver Twist' [1838] and 'Great Expectations' [1862]) but his essential vision is an early modern instance of 'the lost paradise'. It is a vision which the coming of Freud and others served to underline and confirm.

One of the 'heroes' of Schama's 'A History of Britain' is Thomas Bewick [1753-1828], the famed wood engraver of animal and bird subjects. It emerges that he was a campaigner for a universal ethics of sympathy based on our common shared nature - Schama calls it a '*politics* of sympathy'.[37] I find this a fascinating contemporary instance of an understanding very close to that of Arthur Schopenhauer. It is to the latter I want to turn now, to further insist on *his* affinities with Hitchcock. Curiously enough, the revised edition of Bryan Magee's 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1997) notes of Schopenhauer, who went to school in England, how he was in many respects a spiritual Englishman. 'He is given quite often', writes Magee, 'to praising England for being "the most intelligent nation, which is in almost every respect the first in Europe" ...'[38] And the strong empiricist bent in Schopenhauer's approach to knowledge is thoroughly English. When Ackroyd notes how '[t]he history of English philosophy is also the history of empiricism' and quotes William of Ockham (c.1285-c.1349) - 'all knowledge is derived from experience'[39] - it's instructive to remember Schopenhauer's fierce insistence on the primacy of percepts over concepts ...

Now, I said above that I believe Hitchcock came to see 'pure film' as analogous to Will. That discovery, though, may be deemed to have precedents in the findings of such artists/thinkers as Richard Wagner, Walter Pater, and Paul Klee. For example, the latter wrote of art embracing 'the life force itself ... that Romanticism which is one with the universe'.[40] A very Schopenhauerian remark! D.W. Griffith, too, came close to Hitchcock's position when he called film the universal language, 'like music'. According to Lillian Gish, Griffith symbolised this vision in the recurring image of the 'eternal mother' rocking the cradle in *Intolerance*.[41] In this, I sense archetypal evidence for why Hitchcock gives the maternal instinct especial importance in both *The Pleasure Garden* and *Family Plot*. Perhaps, as we'll see, there's also a connection with the emphasis on compassion in the work of the Schopenhauerian playwright, Pirandello.

For me, Will is not problematic. It is what springs to mind when I hear that most salient question of Parmenides (c. 510-450 B.C.), 'Why is there not nothing?' Schopenhauer of course equated it with Kant's unknowable *Ding-an-sich*. So far as we can understand Will's working in the phenomenal world, I value this passage from a book by eminent Australian biologist Charles Birch, 'Regaining Compassion for Humanity and Nature' (1993):

> There is every reason to suppose that [at the very least] living creatures have an inner life and internal relations. ... [Moreover,] the concept of internal relations extends right down to entities such as protons. Of course, we don't talk about conscious feelings at that level, but we do suppose that something analogous to mind is present there.[42]

Not coincidentally, Charles Birch is an animal lover. So was Hitchcock. His daughter has recently given an account of how the film *Born Free* (1965) moved both of her parents to tears.[43] In such a context, I find Schopenhauer highly relevant:

> One must be blind, deaf and dumb ... not to see that the animal is in essence absolutely the same thing that we are, and that the difference lies merely in the accident, the [superficial] intellect, and not in the substance, which is the [W]ill.[44]

I want to suggest that Hitchcock, in his Romantic way, and true to his English independence of mind, held a practically identical understanding of our basic creaturely nature, and that in the last analysis such an understanding constitutes what 'pure film' is all about. Consider for a moment *Frenzy* (1972). It begins of course with Wordsworth mocked, as a glib politician recites lines from 'The Prelude' and boasts of the Thames's new cleanliness. Then a cry of 'Look!' announces the discovery of a strangled woman's body in the river. Evil, we quickly gather, is still with us. And so it proves as

another of Hitchcock's 'lost paradise' metaphors, Covent Garden and its produce market, is shown to be home to the strangler, Bob Rusk. But Hitchcock isn't finished. He proceeds to remind us that we *all* literally partake of not just the produce but also the evil. The film's eating scenes are very pointed. The message - if we have the intellectual courage to admit it - is the same as that of the trailer for *The Birds*, of the Hitchcock-directed episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' called "Arthur" (aired 27 September 1959), and of several other instances in Hitchcock: we murder our fellow creatures but, rather like that glib politician, typically deceive ourselves by saying, 'Oh, but that's different!' That is, we're happy to take refuge in Hamlet's adage, 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.' True, the philosopher David Hume would announce much the same thing (with no 'solution' offered), and I have to say that neither Schopenhauer nor Hitchcock became vegetarians. Notice, though, the applicability of Hamlet's words to what I was saying about 'pure film'. By taking thought, one may refine manifest 'content' into pure 'form' - just as, with Schopenhauer, he refined manifest Representation (appearance) into its underlying unity, Will (reality). 'Pure film' and Will are analogous.

Gentle reader, in this 29th issue of 'The MacGuffin', do I need to put more strongly or plainly the relevance of Schopenhauer to Hitchcock? I'm afraid that I must try, since some of Hitchcock's 'gatekeepers' are still sceptical! True! (On the other hand, I feel only gratitude to Prof. Tony Williams, author of 'Structures of Desire: British Cinema, 1939-1955' [2000], for his support lately.) Firstly, then, consider this, which has the merit of topicality. The main contention of the sumptuous catalogue called 'Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences' (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2000), edited by Dominique Paini and Guy Cogeval, is that Hitchcock was a *Symbolist* filmmaker. Hitchcockians will only welcome that informed insight, so superbly illustrated by scores of fine plates of artworks and film frames. But as the 'MacGuffin' website demonstrated recently, *the philosopher of Symbolism is Schopenhauer*. Here is the start of an essay by Shehira Doss-Davezac tracing Schopenhauer's influence on both the Symbolist and Decadent movements:

> Almost all the painters, writers and critics of the late nineteenth century in France frequently mentioned the influence of Schopenhauer on their ideas. Every literary critic and art historian writing on the period today associates the Symbolists with Schopenhauer.[45]

The second point I would make about Schopenhauer and Hitchcock is as follows. Director Richard Franklin wrote on the 'MacGuffin' website: 'Identification with both sides of a conflict, and our oscillating between those two sides, is the basis of Hitchcockian suspense'. Reading that, I was instantly reminded of Schopenhauer's brilliant piece of empirical observation about the working of blind, amoral Will, that it *does not take sides*. Indeed, rightly understood, *there are no sides* but only the single ultimate reality, the *Ding-an-sich*. Thus suspense is an analogue for what it means to be human - both driven and riven - and again *Schopenhauer is its philosopher*. Schopenhauer himself drew parallels with music, contending that the progression of notes through time is immediately understood by the human mind as analogous to the progress of our inner strivings, such as produce happiness or sadness. A particular example he used was the phenomenon in Wagner's music known as the *suspension*:

> It is a dissonance delaying the final consonance that is with certainty awaited; in this way the longing for it is strengthened, and its appearance affords the greater satisfaction. This is clearly an analogue of the satisfaction of the [individual] will which is enhanced through delay.[46]

Such a passage could easily be adapted to fit, say, Hitchcock's use in *Family Plot* of twin plot strands that gradually come together. But here's Christopher Janaway's comment on Schopenhauer's musical understanding: 'Many have found these ideas reflected especially in the composition of Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde"'.[47] How apt! If Klee was Hitchcock's favourite artist, Wagner was his favourite composer. No fewer than three of his films allude specifically to 'Tristan'.

Thirdly, I offer this. I've just said that Schopenhauer has special relevance to Hitchcock's Symbolist (or mystical) tendencies and to suspense. I find the same philosopher no less relevant to an important aspect of Hitchcock's stock-in-trade: his dealing in everyday subjectivities and their opposite, the special capacities of the artist. On the one hand, Schopenhauer had a singular eye for matters of basic everyday psychology. He stressed, for example, that *boredom* is something fundamental in human experience, which we will do our utmost to minimise (even, say, by going to the movies). He knew, too, that much of our affective life is governed not by our intellects but by subconscious and unconscious needs and tendencies. Janaway writes:

> Anybody wishing to describe the mind as a centre of pure perception and reasoning would have to overcome the considerable evidence Schopenhauer amasses (from anecdote, general observation, and introspection) for the contrary view, that our experience is largely governed by what fits our own aims, instincts, and emotional needs.[48]

The above might serve as an epigraph for several of Hitchcock's films of the 1940s whose deluded hero or heroine must battle painfully towards the light.

On the other hand, when Arthur Schopenhauer, in *his* Romantic way, writes of the capacity of the disinterested *genius* to see with 'the clear eye of the world',[49] he himself is nobody's fool. He is another 'mastermind', like Milton or Hitchcock. Moreover, as Janaway paraphrases:

> A great painter or sculptor *sees* with more intensity and more detail, and has greater ability to retain or reproduce what is seen. But perceiving merely what is present to hand is not enough: '*imagination* is needed in order to complete, arrange, amplify, fix, retain, and repeat at pleasure all the significant pictures of life'. Thus genius, in whichever art form, may go one better than actual experience: a great work of art may reflect reality all the better when the picture it conveys is a heightened one ...[50]

Doesn't that summarise, with uncanny exactitude, what we know of Hitchcock's creative procedure - and his credo that a film 'must look real but it must never be real'?[51] In any case, Hitchcock's genius has often been described in the very terms used by Schopenhauer. Screenwriter Stirling Silliphant, for one, has spoken of his amazement when, on giving Hitchcock a mere outline for a projected episode of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' (I think it was), the director went away and returned next day with the entire show blocked out in his head, right down to individual shots and elaborate camera moves.[52] Or there's the story that Hitchcock himself told, of how he *dictated* to his secretary the entire rape sequence for *Frenzy* - over 100 shots - after lunch one day. And at a seminar for the American Film Institute in 1972, the following exchange occurred between Hitchcock and publisher James Silke, obviously slightly stunned:

> Silke: Are you saying that when you see the material, you can visualize the entire movement of that film?
> Hitchcock: Yes, definitely.
> Silke: The whole film?
> Hitchcock: Beginning to end.
> Silke: Could you do that in 1922?
> Hitchcock: Yes.[53]

My essential point is that a writer like Schopenhauer - perhaps none better - can draw our attention, time and again, to what is central to Hitchcock and his work.

Time to turn to an analysis of Hitchcock's first and last films ...

* * *

Patsy Brand (Virginia Valli), a dancer in the chorus of The Pleasure Garden theatre, befriends Jill Cheyne (Carmelita Geraghty), just up from the country, and helps her get work at the theatre. Jill proves talented but ruthless, determined to be a star. Engaged to Hugh Fielding (John Stuart), who is about to go East for two years, she invites the attentions of wealthy admirers who may help her, including a supposed Russian prince (C. Falkenburg). Meanwhile, Patsy meets Hugh's friend Levet (Miles Mander), who smooth-talks her into marrying him. They spend their honeymoon at Lake Como. Afterwards, both Levet and Hugh leave for the Tropics, where Levet begins living with a native girl (Nita Naldi). Patsy learns the truth about her husband when, hearing that he's ill with fever, she rushes to join him. (Jill is about to marry the Russian, and refuses to help with the fare.) Confronted, Levett becomes half-mad, and drowns the native girl. Later, he lunges at Patsy with a scimitar, but is shot by the plantation manager. Patsy finally finds love and consolation with Hugh, nursing him through an attack of fever and returning with him to London.

Analysis of *The Pleasure Garden*

The above synopsis is based on the content of two non-identical prints of *The Pleasure Garden*. (A third print, held in the G. William Jones Collection, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, has been ascertained by 'The MacGuffin' not to contain significant additional material.)[54] The first of these is the British NFTA print, screened on German television in 1999. Supplementing it is what I'll call the Rohauer print which seems to have been screened originally on Scandinavian television and also in the US. The NFTA print is the longer of the two. It includes the original titles sequence and intertitles, both undoubtedly designed by Hitchcock. But the Rohauer print has several extra scenes. On the other hand,

the Lake Como sequence is significantly extended in the NFTA print ...[55]

Why the differences? Pat Hitchcock's recent book may give a clue. She writes:

> Following the end of filming, my parents had their first - and rare - disagreement. It had to do with the editing of the picture, which my mother supervised; my father said it was 'flashy'! What I believe he meant was that the scenes were more edited than usual. With her editing skills, Alma had made the film more dynamic but might have overdone it a bit.[56]

Accordingly, I wonder whether the film wasn't *released* in two versions, with Alma's cut perhaps approximating the Rohauer print and Hitchcock's version being represented by the statelier NFTA print. The latter sacrifices some comedy business with Mr and Mrs Sidey, for example, but gives more footage to the audition scenes in the Pleasure Garden theatre and considerably extends the Lake Como sequence. However, I emphasise that this is just an hypothesis by me.

According to Dominique Païni, the title of *The Pleasure Garden* was 'borrowed from a London cabaret show'.[57] Curiously, though, there had already been a *play* of the same name, not otherwise related to Hitchcock's film or its source novel, which had been first performed at London's Regent Theatre in June 1924 and which is set entirely in a public park.[58] I mention this only as a reminder of the possible ironic or 'lost paradise' connotations of *all* these works. Another curiosity is this. Mrs Oliver Sandys (Marguerite Florence Barclay), the author of the novel on which Hitchcock's film was based, wrote many novels during her lifetime and several of them had theatrical settings. One of these, 'Mops', was filmed in 1932 as the musical *Born Lucky*, starring René Ray and John Longden (*Blackmail*) and directed by Michael Powell. Inasmuch as its plot concerns a humble waitress who becomes a successful singer and marries a writer, it bears an intriguing relation to Jill's story in *The Pleasure Garden*.

Now to try and clear up a confusion. Both Charles Barr ('English Hitchcock', 1999) and Patrick McGilligan ('Alfred Hitchcock: A Life In Darkness and Light', 2003) write that the film's action moves from London to Africa - Barr repeatedly says 'West Africa', McGilligan says 'an African outpost'. In fact, the film's dialogue never specifies Africa at all, instead using such non-specific phrases as 'out East'. For example, when Levet seduces Patsy in London by telling her how lonely he and Hugh will be while working for two years on a plantation, he uses the line 'I don't go back to the East for a month, darling - take pity on me.' (Subtle, subtle!) Later, in the NFTA print, once the action moves to the plantation, the music score added for the German TV screening begins to sound quite Oriental, using gongs and chimes - suggesting that the score's composer, at any rate, believed that the setting is the Far East[59] rather than Africa. In fact, as I say, the tropical setting is non-specific, and surely Hitchcock intended it that way. He did something similar in *Family Plot* when he deliberately chose not to specify what city (Los Angeles or San Francisco) the events occur in. ('I want it no-city', he reportedly instructed Assistant Director, Howard Kazanjian.)[60] Perhaps we may infer that Hitchcock in 1925 was already more concerned, at certain points in his film, with rendering a country of the mind, or subjective state, than with matters of strict realism.

The film's realism comes at the start, and is hugely impressive. As 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' puts it:

> The show business world of the opening scenes is lovingly detailed, literally and figuratively from all angles, right down to the symbolic moment when Jill first arrives at the stage door, to be promptly relieved of the contents of her purse by one of the shady types loitering there.[61]

I've already described the titles sequence. The film proper begins with a vertically-masked shot of showgirls scampering down a narrow spiral stairway and disgorging onto a stage. A high-angle view from the wings shows them spreading out, Patsy taking her place in the chorus-line. Momentum is maintained as the camera tracks past several obviously well-pleased gentlemen in the front row of the audience, though a lady at the end of the row is already asleep! A cut then brings us back to one of the men. He is elderly and slightly tipsy. He uses opera-glasses to inspect the line of chorines before raising his monacle to admire Patsy in particular. A subjective shot from his viewpoint shows us her legs. You surmise that Hitchcock had just seen E.A. Dupont's *Variety* (1925) which in similar fashion comments on the indolent spectators at the Berlin Wintergarten who use opera-glasses, lorgnettes, etc., to scrutinise the performers while staying oblivious of their individual humanity. If that's so, the line to *Rear Window* is clear.

The theatre's impresario, Oscar Hamilton, is introduced by a couple of sight-gags. When not preening his moustache (à la Inspector Hubbard in *Dial M For Murder* [1954]), he puffs on a cigar in front of a 'Smoking Prohibited' notice (shades of Captain Wiles in *The Trouble With Harry* tut-tutting hypocritically over a bullet-hole in a 'No Shooting' sign). A patriarchal figure, Hamilton will later avail himself of his position as Jill's boss to have his way with her (the casting-

couch syndrome returns in *Stage Fright* [1950] ...)[62] Not that Jill had ever expected anything different, we gather. And the theatre *is* called The Pleasure Garden ...

For the moment, though, Hamilton is concerned to pleasure not himself but his patrons. When the elderly gentleman comes backstage and asks to be introduced to Patsy, Hamilton obliges. However, the old chap turns bashful. Indicating Patsy's blonde hair, he stammers that he has fallen in love with her kiss-curl. Patsy promptly detaches the phoney ringlet and hands it to him. 'Then I hope you'll be very happy together', she smiles. When the gentleman shows his disappointment at being so easily brushed off, Patsy chides him: 'Your love wasn't very lasting, was it?' She makes her escape.

The above exchange introduces the 'happiness' motif, significantly keyed to matters of illusion-versus-reality and youth-versus-age. All the characters are seeking happiness; few of them find it. Patsy's first marriage, to Levet, will quickly sour, and her very honeymoon at Lake Como will foreshadow her disappointment to come. However, Hugh will provide her 'second chance'. It's notable that the NFTA print of *The Pleasure Garden* ends with Patsy asking Hugh: 'We've both suffered ... what have either of us got to live for now?' To which he replies: 'We have one of the greatest things of life ... youth.' Whatever platitudes are here, there is also reasonableness and perhaps something more. A 'second chance' motif would recur in Hitchcock's work, and Donald Spoto has commented on its Catholic significance. 'Hitchcock shared an intuition', writes Spoto, 'that one can, in the last analysis, be freed from corruption only by guilt - by standing condemned and accepting forgiveness and redemption freely or enduring punishment and hoping for a second chance'.[63] Suffering, the human condition, is part of the deal, so to speak - something which Milton's 'On His Blindness' certainly acknowledges. But, yes, it probably helps to have youth on one's side. The realist in Hitchcock notes as much, both in *The Pleasure Garden* and in *Family Plot*. In the latter, elderly Julia Rainbird observes that she has no time left for *trying*, only for *results*.

Realism, then, only *facilitates* Hitchcock's expression of how he sees the world. I've already noted an affinity of Hitchcock with both Hogarth and Dickens, all three Londoners given to some exaggeration of effect but always with an eye for the telling detail, the *realistic* detail. The couturier's arm draped around (the presumably bisexual) Hamilton's shoulder, for example. Or the up-to-the-minute touch that has a copy of the 'Radio Times' in Mr Sidey's lap as he happily beats time to the music in his headphones (the 'Radio Times' first appeared on 28 September 1923). Or the detail of the plank that bridges auditorium and stage at the 'Passion Flowers' rehearsal and across which Hamilton strides with the authority and nonchalance of his station and long practice ...

Mind you, Hitchcock's later *elaborateness* of detail isn't yet fully apparent in *The Pleasure Garden*. There's also some lack of rigour, as when a supposed point-of-view shot of the two girls' clothes being thrown in a heap as they disrobe for bed proves not to have its source in Patsy's glance that had preceded it. The later Hitchcock wouldn't have permitted such laxness.

On the matter of Hitchcock's even-handedness towards the two girls, I wrote in 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' how they are like the two rival boxers in *The Ring*, propelling each other to their respective destinies:

> Patsy is 'nicer', Jill has more God-given talent. Hitchcock simply tells their two stories, which are ultimately one story.[64]

All is One. Or Will. Or just 'pure film'. Which isn't to say that moral issues don't arise, only that Hitchcock doesn't foreclose on them. He was never particularly concerned in his films - not even *The Paradine Case* (1947) or *The Wrong Man* - with what Schopenhauer calls 'temporal justice' as opposed to 'eternal justice'. He clearly shows a degree of admiration for Jill. Significantly, her success can't be separated from the way she *uses* her God-given talent, and that takes chutzpah. Watch how she stands up to Hamilton from the start and demands a salary of £20 instead of the £5 he has just offered her. Or how she 'plays the field' of her admirers (Hamilton, the Russian Prince, et al.) to facilitate her new lifestyle and its attendant benefits. In accordance with the Biblical parable, she is not one to hide her talent under a bushel - another of the lessons of Milton's 'On His Blindness'.

Eliot Stannard's script for *The Pleasure Garden* has several interesting aspects. Stannard, eleven years Hitchcock's senior, may have been largely responsible for the sophisticated cross-cutting described earlier. Charles Barr refers to 'a succession of articles around 1920' in which Stannard 'showed that he was alive to the possibilities of ... cross-cutting and metonymy'.[65] Further, Barr's 'English Hitchcock' quotes a passage from Stannard criticising scripts that have 'a series of exciting incidents' but no 'central motive [sic] or theme'.[66] Such principles of construction very quickly became Hitchcock's own. (The question of whether or not he afterwards gave Stannard due credit may thus be academic. After

all, his own brilliant script for *The Ring* shows that by 1927 he had already mastered Stannard's principles.) More than forty years before *Topaz* (1969), flower imagery in *The Pleasure Garden* helps signal a 'lost paradise' motif. For a start, the theatre is called The Pleasure *Garden* and its current show is 'Passion *Flowers*'. In the Rohauer print, just after Levet has been introduced to Patsy and he has asked her, 'Do you believe in love?' (in the NFTA print, 'Love is a wonderful thing, isn't it?'), we see her shake her head - whereupon he removes a flower from his buttonhole and tosses it away. A moment before, *Hugh* had turned to the fickle Jill and had nervously fingered the flower she was wearing as if to reassure himself of her love. His gesture in turn harks back to that of the elderly gentleman who had reached for Patsy's phoney kiss-curl. Hugh's nervousness proves justified, of course. Jill acknowledges as much when, in a restaurant-cum-ballroom, she mocks him: 'Poor Hugh thinks he might lose his tender flower.' However, at the end of the film, he seems to have the last laugh. As he lies in his verandah hammock, recovering from fever but now assured of Patsy's love, the camera pulls back to disclose flowers blooming where they hadn't been apparent before.

Another visual motif, attributable to Stannard, is the film's sea imagery. It represents flux - not yet, as in the later Hitchcock, the Will itself or its direct effects. In the several intertitles featuring sea and clouds, the mood grows increasingly troubled. Such titles can occur even when the nominal setting is London, for Patsy is thinking of either Levet or Hugh out East. The restaurant sequence is pivotal for events to follow, being where the Russian Prince makes his successful play for Jill. In the background, visible through a window, the sea (or the Thames) ripples benignly - an image that made me think of the opening pages of Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' (1902). The film's climactic scenes, in Levet's hut, also take place beside rippling water, that of a lagoon. But though the water again appears benign, events will show otherwise. Levet (who had told Hugh, 'There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it') kills his native mistress by drowning her - at the very moment she has thrust out her arms to him in gratitude for her supposed rescue. Soon afterwards, back inside the hut now lit by a lamp that throws garish shadows, he attempts to kill Patsy too - with a scimitar. The Exotic, supposedly tamed by Civilisation, may prove murderous yet. Call it the Other, that which lies deep within.

Levet is the prototype of a Hitchcock villain, and in his case the director allows that evil may corrupt a person beyond redemption. Superficially charming and a smooth talker, such a person typically preys on the goodness or frailty of his victims. One of Levet's descendants is Adamson in *Family Plot*. Prototypical, too, is the scene where Levet comes on Patsy in the street when she is feeling cast down by the behaviour of Jill (whom she has promised Hugh to steer from temptation). A bare stucco wall and a small high window make the shot look as desolate as any in Karl Grune's *Die Strasse/The Street* (1923). Levet's s shadow preceding him, he is the Vile Seducer, perhaps the very Devil. In fact, the shot is the predecessor of the one in *Frenzy* in which Rusk in the street comes upon Babs who is feeling low, having just quit her job at the Globe public house. In a sudden deathly silence, Rusk's voice intrudes, preceding him with its fateful question, 'Got a place to stay?'

Another first for *The Pleasure Garden* is the fact that Hitchcock the animal lover included a dog (cf the French poodle and the British bulldog in *Easy Virtue* [1927], Towser in *Young and Innocent*, Jasper in *Rebecca* [1940]). This one sees through Levet from the start, growling at him. Also, he recognises Hugh from the start as a friend. His name is Cuddles and he belongs to Patsy (the Sideys take care of him when Patsy is abroad). To anthropomorphise for a moment, Cuddles's intuitions are not only suitably English but they show that he possesses what Carl Jung calls the 'natural mind'.[67] Of his own such faculty, Jung wrote that 'it is linked with the gift - not always pleasant - of seeing people and things as they are ... In this I am like a dog - he can be tricked, but he always smells it out in the end.'[68] Jung tells us that he inherited his 'natural mind' from his mother.[69] He adds:

> This 'insight' is based on instinct, or on a '*participation mystique*' with others. It is as if the 'eyes of the background' do the seeing in an impersonal act of perception.[70]

For what it's worth, the Rohauer print of *The Pleasure Garden* ends with Cuddles *happy*. Patsy and Hugh have returned safely to England, to be greeted by Cuddles and the Sideys. Cuddles is last seen expressing his pleasure by chomping through the cord of Mr Sidey's headphones.

Now, what Jung calls the 'eyes of the background' seems to me a pertinent phrase to apply to aspects of *Family Plot*. But first, in order to better understand the continuity of that film and *The Pleasure Garden*, we need to consider the latter's Lake Como sequence ...

* * *

The Lake Como sequence. This runs for nearly nine minutes in the NFTA print as against about four minutes in the

Rohauer print. Essentially it represents Patsy's view of her honeymoon. Hers are the great expectations - something deeper than just sensual delight - that are soon crushed when Levet tells her not to be 'sentimental' over the village bambinos, 'those filthy brats' as he calls them. What I would extrapolate from this sequence is how the maternal instinct has already a central place in Hitchcock's work. Always, like Jung, he seems to have sensed that powerful mysteries - or mysterious powers - are bound up with it. That is surely one reason why Blanche in *Family Plot* is treated by the film so sympathetically. Through her 'control' named 'Henry' (one of her 'children of the night'?) she is able to plumb the 'outer darkness' for the secret knowledge concealed there.

What is not yet present, in 1925, in Hitchcock's work is the *ambiguity* that he would attach to the maternal. Both the Italian village women and Mrs Sidey in London (for whom Patsy has been like a daughter) are depicted realistically. The threatening Great Mother figures, as in *Rebecca* (Rebecca herself), *Vertigo* (the mother superior), and *Psycho* (the spirit of Mrs Bates), lie well ahead. In those three films, religious iconography - the organ motif in Franz Waxman's score for *Rebecca*, say, which in turn evokes the sea - carries the sense of ultimate mystery which I would further link with the ambivalent life-death force, Will. However, there's already a moment when Patsy at Lake Como prays to a religious statue in the village. Also, the sequence evokes *both* sexuality and the maternal instinct, which are certainly the two primary aspects of the will-to-life. If we now understand that, for Hitchcock, sexuality is essentially masculine and the maternal instinct feminine, we are well positioned to appreciate what he is doing not only in *The Pleasure Garden* and *Family Plot* but also in a film like *Psycho*.

Concerning the latter, I wrote in 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story':

> In the manner of [German] Expressionism, Marion wants a more 'authentic' existence, though in her case this simply means marrying Sam and having a child by him. Here, she is like Patsy in *The Pleasure Garden*, whom we see at Lake Como gaze wistfully at several mothers with their babies. A photo of a baby is on the wall of Marion's room as she packs to run away (presumably the photo is of Marion herself); the stolen money had been intended by Cassidy as a wedding-present for his 'baby' daughter. Thus the maternal instinct, even when travestied, is basic to *Psycho*.[71]

I'm saying that the sex drive, the maternal instinct, and the religious impulse run side by side in practically any Hitchcock film you might name. In their perfect conjunction, Hitchcock implies, we might have the 'lost paradise'.

Many of the director's deeper intuitions, then, were already being called into play when he filmed the Lake Como sequence. For example, what the Lake represents in terms of water symbolism is placidness, water *tamed*. This corresponds more to Patsy's ideal of happiness than the restless Levet's, though for a few short hours it is realisable, and both partake of it. Fittingly, the sequence begins in moonlight (or day-for-night, to be exact). A title speaks of 'Moonlight and soft music over the waters', and an artfully framed shot shows Patsy and Levet in evening clothes sitting at a small table beside the Lake, in a kind of bower. A rose lies on the table, and Patsy reaches out for it: not the first such gesture in the film. But when Levet, too brusquely, takes her hand for a kiss, the rose is crushed. As this is the couple's bridal night, we might see here a prolepsis of Patsy's de-flowering - yet her troubled expression in much of the remainder of the sequence seems to refer to something else. To intimations from her 'natural mind' perhaps?

Hitchcock once said that his own idea of happiness was 'a clear horizon'. Lake Como, of course, does not offer that, and in fact Baron Ventimiglia has photographed it as if it were a dark bowl. This was deliberate, for the lines from the 'Rubaiyat' that annouce the 'morning after' contain the same idea:

> Awake! For Morning in the Bowl of Night
> Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to flight.

Only, we may well feel, with Patsy, that something more than the stars have been put to flight, and that the 'Bowl of Night' has contained something almost sinister. Hitchcock undercuts his basic Romanticism in several ways. All of them are subtle - even the symbolism of Levet as a snake-in-the-grass - but none more so than the scenes of *the boat on the Lake*. The seductive title that speaks of 'soft music over the waters' refers to this boat containing a musician and his lady. Eventually, though, we realise that it has been paid for by Levet to be there - part of the bridal package bought by him for the occasion and including the hire of the vast bridal suite itself. Next day, to further sober us up, Hitchcock works in a shot of the same boat (or its twin), now moored and skeletal-looking. He would use a similar night/day effect in *Downhill* (1927) to characterise a Paris dance hall, first alluring, then drab.

The sequence overall is the basis of future sequences in such films as *The Manxman* (1928) and *I Confess* (1953), and even

arguably of whole films, such as *Vertigo*. When in the latter Scottie chides Madeleine/Judy, 'You shouldn't have been [so] sentimental', his remark is, well, a bit rich. The 'hard-headed' ex-detective has just indulged both himself and his director in the most sumptuous sequences of 'sentimental' Romanticism that Hitchcock ever filmed! But that's Hitchcock's chutzpah for you. In 1925 he had said, in effect, 'But I *like* sentimentality' - and had got away with it. Brilliantly.

* * *

Schopenhauer's thesis is that the world presents itself to us under two aspects - as Will and [Representation] - and that these two aspects are always distinct and always conjoined; that they totally embrace, or inform, one another. To speak in terms of either alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality ...

- Oliver Sacks, 'Awakenings' (Picador edition, 1982), p.219

On the coincidences, resemblances and surprises of life, Dickens liked especially to dwell, and few things moved his fancy so pleasantly. The world, he would say, was so much smaller than we thought it; we were all so connected by fate without knowing it and people supposed to be far apart were so constantly elbowing each other; and tomorrow bore so close a resemblance to nothing half so much as yesterday.

- John Forster, 'The Life of Charles Dickens' (1871-74)

Hitchcock several times discussed with me what the theme of [*Family Plot*] was and how it was structured. It was two separate stories about two different pairs of people - how they eventually criss-cross and pass each other. He was fascinated by that. And that really *is* the movie.

- Howard Kazanjian, interviewed on the *Family Plot* DVD

Analysis of *Family Plot* (1): a certain 'equilibrium'

Hitchcock's famous remark to the editors of 'Movie' (UK), about how 'everything's perverted in a different way',[72] is pure Schopenhauer. On the one hand, the director is effectively acknowledging the existence of Will, which is in everything though it will finally play each of us for a sucker. On the other hand, there are the numberless *components* of Will, including human beings, none of which is the Thing-in-itself though all partake of it. They are all 'perversions', or diminishments, of Will, and Schopenhauer gave them the collective name of Representation. Moreover, because each of us is subject to the mental and physical categories of time and space, and of causal interconnection, we are further made powerless to know the whole picture. (How pathetic is the attempt of the hysterical mother in *The Birds* to attribute a cause of the bird attacks.) In short, we are all 'fakes', both existentially and intellectually.

And then there are the 'performances' people give. In *Family Plot* everyone is a 'performer', with greater or lesser degrees of 'sincerity'. Ernest Lehman's earlier Hitchcock screenplay, *North by Northwest*, had a similar premise: life is an insubstantial pageant, or game, full of 'nothing' where you thought there was 'reality'. Yet Hitchcock again manages to have his cake and eat it. Like the Lake Como sequence in *The Pleasure Garden*, the classic opening scene of *Family Plot* gives full bent to his Romantic intuitions while appearing to undercut them. The *basso profondo* voice of 'Henry' lampoons the possessed Regan in William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973); a shot of 'Madame' Blanche (Barbara Harris) peeking through her fingers at her client, Julia Rainbird (Cathleen Nesbitt), would seem to tell us unequivocally that Blanche is a fake. Yet listen to the marvellous, swirling John Williams score, attend to the masterly economy of Hitchcock's camera moves (when he allows Leonard South to make them), note the modulated performances by two fine actresses. Perhaps above all, savour the plush, red décor of the wealthy Miss Rainbird's sitting-room, red being the colour of *life*. To shore herself against age and loneliness, the spinster has settled herself in a Tudor-fronted California mansion in which are beautiful objects that might do honour to the English good taste of Hitchcock himself: tall vases, fine silverware, leather-bound books, rich carpet. If all of this constitutes the mise-en-scène for simply a caustic satire on Miss Rainbird's gullibility, and perhaps of Hitchcock's audience, then it is extraordinarily painstaking. And such an explanation of the director's intentions doesn't begin to account for either the scene's power or, yes, its special *sincerity* on Hitchcock's part.

In this respect, notice too how Blanche is Miss Rainbird's counterpart - mirroring both her movements and her apparel. It is the first of several scenes that emphasise *rapport*. In her slightly kooky way (Hitchcock seems to have briefly considered Goldie Hawn for the part), Blanche is indeed a figure of life. She is first seen at the end of the brief credits sequence, her head seeming to emerge from swirling green 'ectoplasm' in a crystal ball (which may suggest a mandala symbol), and we hear women's voices singing. Both the 'ghostly' green colour and the 'ethereal' choir derive from

Hitchcock's cherished memory of seeing J.M. Barrie's 'Mary Rose' in 1920, starring Fay Compton. That play's effect, notes Cynthia Asquith, was indeed 'greatly enhanced by [the] haunting music'.[73] And of ghost stories in general, Peter Ackroyd cites the statistic that roughly 70% are written by English men and women.[74] His explanation? '[T]he island has always been filled with ghosts. ... They may be said to haunt the English sensibility. ... The English tone has been described as one of "romantic strangeness".'[75] Given that the splendid Barbara Harris plays Blanche to perfection, it seems almost un-gallant of Hitchcock to declare in a *Family Plot* trailer: 'Being a master spiritualist myself, I can assure you that Madame Blanche is very definitely a fake.' But anyway there you have it: the director's avowed identification with Blanche as a delver into life's occult mysteries - albeit with himself cast as her superior! Does that make him less, or more, of a charlatan? He carefully doesn't tell us! His insouciance is effectively another case of his saying, 'But I *like* sentimentality!' Another case of his chutzpah. Still, there's a clear connection with the wink that ends the film. It's Blanche's wink but in breaking the so-called 'fourth wall' (like the finger of the pointing jester at the end of *Blackmail*), it comes from Hitchcock. Far from being pretentious or trite, it is as apt a resolution to any film that poses 'Pirandellian' questions of the relation of cinema and audience (Bergman's *Persona* included) as one could ask.

Hitchcock, I'm convinced, intuited that a reason we go to the cinema is to try and regain a sense of wholeness, and with it our sense of humanity. Recall the importance he attached to giving us a cross-section of society. Here, I would ask the reader to consider what John Forster tells us so delighted Dickens - *his* intuition that everyone is 'connected by fate without knowing it' and that 'tomorrow' is very like 'yesterday'. In 'The MacGuffin' #20, I showed by analysis the bearing of such observations on Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* where the paths of the 'right' man and the 'wrong' man cross at least once before their eventual uncomprehending (and indeed hostile) final encounter. The Forster passage seems to me even more pertinent to the effect Hitchcock wanted for *Family Plot*. In fact, I believe that the passage expresses something that most thoughtful or creative people have felt, notwithstanding that few of them have been as well placed as Dickens or Hitchcock to apprehend its truth to millions of readers or viewers. Boiled down, that truth represents our old friend, the notion that the Many is One. I'm not referring to the transcendental pretence - which Hitchcock saw through - but to Schopenhauer's understanding that Will and Representation are two sides of the same coin. If we were freed of the mental and physical categories of time and space and causal interconnection, such as Manny in *The Wrong Man* cannot begin to grasp (as I again showed by analysis) and which Scottie in *Vertigo* would 'transcend' if he could, we would perhaps enjoy a state of all-at-once-ness in which direct knowledge of the Thing-in-itself were possible. As things stand, all such intuitions are mere inklings of a much more intense state of apprehension and being.

Nonetheless, artists have always sought to find suitable forms to *represent* such intuitions. Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* (1966), with its allusions to the Tower of Babel,[76] and *Family Plot* are two such representations, and I use Schopenhauer's term advisedly. It suggests modesty of intent, for one thing. Hitchcock (or a part of him) always knew that he was *faking* a knowledge he did not really have, for *nobody* has it though we may appreciate its forms when we encounter them in art, dream, etc. And the *quality* of the forms matters, of course. When Blanche goes calling on the 'A. Adamsons' listed in the phone book, amongst her encounters are a pair of twins, both motor mechanics. The effect is both comical and uncanny, for it sounds the film's main motif, of the search for interconnectedness which is bound to disappoint or end in bathos. (A variant on this effect is the film's 'Mondrian', the overhead shot in the cemetery that shows George [Bruce Dern] pursuing and catching up with Mrs Maloney [Katherine Helmond], widow of a murderer. Cornered, she reacts by kicking the gravestone of 'Eddie Shoebridge'. 'Fake!' she admonishes.) Manny's crooked double in *The Wrong Man*, the feuding Siamese twins in *Saboteur* (1942), and the plain-looking, open-necked twins on the bus in *Torn Curtain* provide further variants, again with obvious irony. Dickens, on the other hand, who must have been more taken with the whole idea, chose to give us the benevolent Cheeryble brothers in 'Nicholas Nickleby' ...

So why is Hitchcock so well-disposed towards that *other* fake spiritualist, Blanche? Or, perhaps better, why *shouldn't* he be? Remember we noted that Blanche and Patsy (in *The Pleasure Garden*) have much in common. Both are basically good people, and indomitable. Just as Patsy's would-be nemesis is the villainous Levet, so Blanche's is Adamson (William Devane). In addition, Blanche has chutzpah, like Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit*, and that is a quality which Hitchcock was the last person to underestimate. Some fine observations on the topic I am considering here are made by Eric Bentley in 'The Life of the Drama' (1965). Consider:

> The limitation of [the] popular understanding of acting in everyday life is that it is marked with disapproval, applies only to hypocritical activity, and presupposes that most action is not acting.[77]

Turning to Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana's 'Soliloquies in England' (a text, as we'll see, also endorsed by J.B. Priestley), Bentley then quotes this gem:

> What ... could be more splendidly sincere than the impulse to play in real life, to rise on the rising wave of every

> feeling and let it burst, if it will, into the foam of exaggeration? ... To embroider upon experience is not to bear false witness against one's neighbour, but to bear true witness to oneself.[78]

However, even this idea of self-realisation through performance, or exaggeration, though very applicable to the Cockney in Hitchcock himself, doesn't quite say what I want to say about Blanche. First, then: Blanche doesn't know how good she is until she tries, really tries, and thereby releases her deepest intuitions. Second, I believe that Hitchcock took on board lessons he learned from the Italian Pirandello (whose fame was peaking in the 1920s) and ascribes them to Blanche's work as a medium. Bentley writes:

> [Pirandello] went much further than [Erving] Goffman, and spoke, not just of *presenting* oneself, but of constructing oneself [and others].
>
> . . .
>
> [T]he ending of 'Right You Are' is a paean of praise to role-playing, to the theatrical view of life, for what it says is: whatever the veiled lady's lost birth certificate may have on it, ... [s]he plays the role each [relative] wishes her to play. Everyone would agree that this is most feminine of her, and Pirandello is adding that he considers it most human and right.[79]

Gentle reader, I told you that Pirandello was a Schopenhauerian! When Bentley, in a further passage, likens the veiled Mrs Ponza's self-abnegation to Cordelia's eventual 'melting' towards her father in 'King Lear' - becoming 'as he would desire her'[80] - the essential *ethical* idea resembles Schopenhauer's teaching apropos the temporary stilling of individual will by great art, right living, etc.[81]

Now, for all her 'fakery', I see Blanche as a *facilitator*. She facilitates her clients' well-being (whether or not she exactly sees it that way), but, even more importantly, by being such a sympathetic character, she facilitates *our* entry into the film and thus its humanity. I'll make an analogy. Carl Jung wrote of the medieval practice of alchemy that it wasn't just phoney 'science' or 'chemistry' as those terms have meaning today: its formulae and mystique embodied the timeless quest for individuation, wholeness, the 'lost paradise' even. It's no accident, for example, that alchemy contains numerous - and psychologically potent - mandala symbols.

Likewise, it finally doesn't matter that dear Blanche is a 'fake' like everyone else in the film. On the contrary, she may the better *redeem* us in the Pirandellian sense, which is how I think Hitchcock sees her role. As a person, she is at times exemplary. In that remarkable opening scene, 'Henry' speaks of 'a holding back' because of 'selfishness' - not a reflection on Blanche herself. Rather, she strikes me as being already well on the way to overcoming just such obstacles to individuation. That is, she has an excellent set of life skills. Witness her virtuoso 'performance', so unselfconscious, in the scene where she simultaneously conducts under her breath a fierce argument with George over car keys, and, as 'Henry', emits extravagant whoops for the benefit of Ida Cookson (Louise Lorrimer) in the next room! Also, like Hitchcock, she seems to have the skill of deliberately keeping her 'innocence', of concealing from her left hand what her right hand is doing! Good for you, Blanche!

In essential respects, Blanche is the opposite of the ambitious Scottie in *Vertigo*. *He* is no facilitator - he will not 'melt' - and his tragedy is that of the *arrogance* of the transcendental pretence. By contrast, Blanche is naturally resourceful in helping others. She is potentially a Good Mother figure, someone scarcely seen in Hitchcock since *Juno and the Paycock* (1930). That, too, seems to me implicit in her wink at the end.

Mind you, the female and male principles perennially clash in Hitchcock, for he was a realist as well as a Romantic. Nonetheless, he lived in hope that they might be reconciled, and in that respect his 'solution' was no different from that of Wagner and of many others. In a famous letter of 1854, Wagner wrote:

> The highest satisfaction and expression of the individual is to be found only in his complete absorption, and that is only possible through love. Now a human being is both *man* and *woman*, and it is only when these two are united that the real human being exists, and thus it is only by love that man and woman attain to the full measure of humanity.[82]

There, I think, you have the main subject and message of *Family Plot*, and there isn't a lot that I wish to add. I watched Hitchcock direct part of this film, and I have seen the result many times. Also, I have now viewed the excellent Laurent Bouzereau documentary about it which is included on the DVD. (Perhaps my one major criticism of the documentary is

that it includes so much footage from the film itself, from every key scene, that viewing the film becomes anti-climactic as it has been divested of its narrative rhythm and power to surprise.) I feel strongly that *Family Plot* reveals part of the essential Alfred Hitchcock. So, briefly, here are two or three more observations that I like from Santayana's 'Soliloquies in England', as quoted by J.B. Priestley. After calling Santayana 'the visitor who came closest [in his views] to my own idea of Englishness', Priestley first quotes this:

> ... I could see clearly that this [post-Edwardian] England was pre-eminently the home of decent happiness and a quiet pleasure in being oneself. ... Such modesty in strength is entirely absent from the effusive temperament of the Latin, who is cocky and punctilious so long as his conceit holds out, and then utterly humbled and easily corrupted; entirely absent also from the doctrinaire of the German school, in his dense vanity and officiousness that nothing can put to shame.[83]

Santayana, notes Priestley, considered England 'the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy ...' Finally, we're given a couple of overlapping statements by Santayana that Priestley feels 'take us close to [the] secret of Englishness'. The first: '*What governs the Englishman is his inner atmosphere, the weather in his soul.*' The second: '*The Englishman establishes a sort of satisfaction and equilibrium in his inner man, and from that citadel of rightness he easily measures the value of everything that comes within his moral horizon.*'[84]

It's true that producer David Selznick once called Hitchcock 'not exactly a man to go camping with'. Nonetheless, I believe Hitchcock to have found the 'equilibrium in his inner man' that Santayana talks of; and that by knowing how to film, if always obliquely, just such a wise self-possession and the knowledge it brings, Hitchcock was sharing with us his special genius. He certainly shares it with us in *Family Plot*. To me, that's a film which embraces 'the life force itself' and what Klee called 'that Romanticism which is one with the universe'.

But to show how little of the wisdom I see distilled in *Family Plot* is inadvertent, I'll conclude by analysing a very pragmatic aspect of the film. I mean its organisation of our sympathies and antipathies.

* * *

'Isn't muddle a better breeding ground for kindliness and individuality than a world order that's imposed?'
- Agatha Christie[85]

Analysing *Family Plot* (2): muddling through

The male and female principles contend in *Family Plot*, as in practically every Hitchcock film, but seldom look like coming to a rapprochement. To offset the sense of perpetual conflict, or just of emptiness, this genial film offers fleeting scenes of *rapport*. More often, though, we feel that something essential has gone missing, that the world is a disembodied place. Hitchcock switches our sympathies and emotions every which way, but ultimately the wink that ends the film tells us that he knew all the time what we wanted, and what we were looking for. *None of this is accidental.*

Now, I've already mentioned the 'rhyming' of the two central couples and I've referred to the significance of the twin motor mechanics. But opposing a real coming together, on every side there's fakery and 'deceit' (the working-title of the film) and also the sense of 'ghostly' absence. The latter extends even to the dialogue, such as Adamson's remark, 'A spirit is never at home' and the description for the police by the kidnapped businessman Constantine (Nicolas Colasanto) of how he'd been imprisoned in a room where a 'disembodied' voice gave him instructions. Appropriately, the film was advertised with the catchphrase, 'There's no body in the family plot!'

Just about the only image of *community* is that of the buttoned-down congregation in St Anselm's Cathedral, with some obvious irony. The *idea* of community is posited more by the absence of groups of people than their presence, so again there's no *body* to be found! The 'no-city' of the film is almost literally that at times: streets after hours with little visible activity except for a few passing cars; some isolated rural spots. Trade is generally slow both at the garage run by Maloney (Ed Lauter) at Barlow Creek and at 'Dave & Mabel's' café on the quiet upper reaches of Mount Sherman. (Perhaps it's significant, too, that when on Mount Sherman a sizeable party of people *does* appear, it's a pack of bikies, possibly Hell's Angels!)

Of his partnership, both business and sexual, with Fran (Karen Black), Adamson rather wilfully says, 'We move as one!' But before the end there will be signs that the partnership is cracking up. (Maloney's garage business with his wife has

already dissolved, following his fiery death on Mount Sherman.) On the other hand, our 'Everyman' couple, Blanche and George, have somehow muddled through in approved English fashion! All of which goes to show how carefully Hitchcock has been manipulating our hopes and feelings.

The film's *ground*, on which all of its moves occur, is sexuality, that single most potent manifestation of the will-to-life, as Schopenhauer always said. Critic Jack Foley is correct when he notes: 'There are a staggering number of sexual references in *Family Plot*'.[86] But, then, that was always pretty much the case with Hitchcock, going right back to *The Pleasure Garden*. In *Family Plot* emphasis is also given to the community that is *absent*, 'family' in the broadest sense of that term. So this is where our sympathies for Blanche the facilitator are made to come into play. She has a mother's role to perform ...

There's a whole pattern to this. Typically, whenever Blanche or George range about, they strike up a rapport with people. Ironically, this occurs more often with other people than with each other! With women, in particular, both Blanche and George bring out a warmth that is partly, at least, maternal. You can see it as George wins the confidence of Mrs Hannagan (Marge Redmond) in the department store, their identical red hair straight away making the point of their mateyness (facilitated by George's hint of a payment for information, of course!). The screenplay's description of the mise-en-scène emphasises the *feminine* and *maternal* aspects: 'The HUBBUB OF VOICES is mostly female, and the display counters show mostly feminine, intimate mysteries ...'.[87] Vera Hannagan works at the Playtex brassiere counter - she's '[a] mid-fiftyish SALESWOMAN who fills her [own] Playtex very well ...'.[88] Hitchcock modified this slightly in the filming, the pink tone of the décor now carrying much of the suggestiveness. Its reminder of the 'maternal' Blanche is intentional, of course. But, paradigmatically, the tone is abruptly shattered when the mannish Senior Saleswoman appears and orders Mrs Hannagan back to work. Paradigmatic, too, is how George *fails to deliver* on his promise of payment ...

Likewise, when Blanche herself goes investigating late in the film, it's clear that she has a winning way with people. Mrs Clay (Edith Atwater) in Adamson's jewellery store divulges her boss's private address - this for a total stranger with whom she is alone in the shop at closing time. (I give the scene just 5/10 for plausibility, it must be said.) And the hotel doorman, Pete, who supervises a row of cabs, greets Blanche as an old buddy when she asks him if he's seen George recently ('Hello, there, Blanche baby ...').

Both Blanche and George are hugely fallible, at times gauche or clumsy. George can be taken unawares or literally trip himself up. That's the very best part of the gag where he stumbles in the cemetery - he's already stumbling when he tries to avoid a grave, and so stumbles some more! Blanche, in gratitude to Mrs Clay, seems to want to tell the lady's horoscope, but guesses her star-sign wrongly and must beat a hasty retreat.

By contrast, Fran and Arthur for much of the film are depicted as smoothly, efficiently sexual in everything they do. Their relationship should be seen in the context of the film's seeming critique of modern life, circa 1975. Organised religion is particularly singled out. A teasing part of the scene in 'Dave & Mabel's' café is the arrival of 'the scarlet woman' for her assignation with the priest. The colour red is very pronounced in this scene: the café has homey red-chequered curtains and tablecloths, and Mabel herself is another redhead like George. Nonetheless, the young lady in the red dress doesn't really 'fit' the scene. In fact, she bears a striking resemblance to Fran: she is another 'modern miss'. I actually think of her as like Alice in *Blackmail* who visits the lecherous artist in his studio and dresses up for him in a tutu while he plays 'Miss Up-to-Date' on the piano.

On this reading, the priest is an out-and-out scoundrel, up there with Adamson! But, no, that's not how the film works, either! Hitchcock is not so much (or at all) judging the priest or his lady friend as presenting an interesting situation non-commitally! I've suggested that the respect in which Hitchcock held the life-force is bound up with his concern with 'pure film'. I find that very healthy and non-destructive of him, frankly. For reasons I've given, I suspect that he often felt, with Hamlet, that 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.' Short of murder, anyway.

To return to Blanche now. She is religious after a fashion, as *both* Patsy and Jill were in *The Pleasure Garden*. There's a dusty religious statue in a niche above her desk, and we hear her at least once pulling George up for blaspheming. So again our sympathies are being manipulated in favour of good Blanche! On the other hand, I've just spoken of the relativity of truth - *phenomenal* truth, that is. Accordingly, that religious statue *may* win Blanche points for 'goodness'. Equally, that same detail fits with the film's apparent critique of organised religion, especially modern Catholicism. 'See', it could be surmised, 'a good soul like Blanche, a former believer, has been *lost* to the Church and now resorts to occultism, to being a medium!' Fitting the same pattern, even some of the Church's priests now seem compelled to seek non-orthodox means of attaining solace ...

A lot is going on in *Family Plot*, but not all of it is fully communicated or fully realised. The funeral service in the quiet green cemetery at Barlow Creek uses a Mormon text. But why? May we infer that the Irish killer Maloney had been converted from Catholicism at some stage, perhaps when he married Mrs Maloney? In any event, Bill Krohn believes that Hitchcock felt strongly about the wording of that text with its emphasis on how Christ 'suffereth the pains of every living creature. ... And he does this that the Resurrection may pass on all men, that all may stand before him at the great and judgement day.'[89] Such a reference to the Resurrection matches a theme of *The Trouble With Harry* (1955), not to mention central themes of Dickens's 'A Tale of Two Cities' (1859) and 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood' (1870) respectively. However, any intended contrast by Hitchcock of heterodox and orthodox lifestyles, of small but vital rural community and big-city church with bloated congregation (and the rest of the world perhaps leading a spiritually 'disembodied' existence) doesn't really come across. Not that I want to impose any such pat reading on the film in any case! A general sense that something important is missing or stagnating but life goes bravely on (rather as in Dickens's 'Drood', *his* final, life-affirming work) engages me amply.

Speaking of Dickens, and life going bravely on, may bring me to my final point. The 'maternal' motif in *Family Plot*, which Hitchcock here clearly connects with goodness, comes to the fore again near the end of the film. It has been linked with Blanche but now it is Fran's turn to embody it. In *The Pleasure Garden*, as we saw, Patsy at Lake Como had yearningly eyed the local bambinos in their mothers' arms. Then, at the end, she *nurses* Hugh back to health (as Lisa in *Rear Window* nurses Jeff). In *Rich and Strange*, Emily actually says, 'A wife is more than half a mother!' In *Psycho*, although the 'maternal' theme is essentially satirised, one thing about Marion is very plain: her motivation for crazily stealing the $40,000 is to have a child by Sam. (The novel reminds us that she is not getting any younger.) My point about Fran, then, is that she finally shows signs of rebelling against the ruthlessness of her partner, Adamson, who has announced that Blanche must die. And that this is very 'feminine', even 'maternal', of her.

Again there are precedents. It is basically a melodramatic thing. In Dickens's 'Oliver Twist', the hitherto submerged 'womanly feeling' (Chapter XL) of the moll Nancy finally compels her to betray Bill Sikes by arranging the abducted Oliver's escape. In Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), the kidnappers are a childless couple, the Draytons. When Mr Drayton is ordered by his political bosses to kill young Hank, Mrs Drayton secretly facilitates Hank's rescue by his father. In *Family Plot*, Fran baulks at Adamson's plan to do away with Blanche. Detecting her resistance, he becomes increasingly wilful. 'Will you do as I say?' he demands. But when circumstances deliver Blanche to them, Fran panics. Her blunder in allowing Blanche to see the kidnapped Archbishop brings matters to a head. We sense Fran's resistance to her jeweller lover's 'practically flawless' schemes - to *the masculine principle run amok*. And *that* is part of our secret satisfaction when our 'Everyman' couple, George and Blanche, who are somehow so English, finally and literally slam the door on the matter.

Wink, wink, gentle reader.

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Notes

1. See S. Gottlieb (ed.), 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock' (1995), p. 131
2. I thank Michael Walker for this information.
3. Note, for example, the theatrical connotations of the *thé dansant* climax.
4. This sequence indubitably helped inspire the life-vs-death credits sequence of *Torn Curtain* (1966). See 'The MacGuffin' #27.
5. I believe that Christopher Morris has made a similar point.
6. K. Mogg, 'The Alfred Hitchcock Story' (uncut UK edition, 1999), p. 19
7. P. Ackroyd, 'Albion' (2002), p. 280
8. I thank Bill Krohn for telling me that Hitchcock owned several Hogarth prints. He also tells me that Hitchcock owned various editions of Dickens, including several sets of the original novels in their serial parts.
9. Ackroyd, p. 321
10. P. Hitchcock & L. Bouzereau, 'The Woman Behind the Man' (2003), p. 82
11. Quoted in Mogg, p. 180
12. See Truffaut's 'Hitchcock', any edition
13. Ackroyd, pp. 311-12. All-inclusiveness is also a trait of some Romantic writers, as I believe Jacques Barzun has noted.
14. See Truffaut, any edition.
15. Ackroyd, p. 448. Both Ackroyd and Priestley point out that eclecticism and being pragmatic are English qualities.
16. See R. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750' (1988), p. 1 and passim.
17. Solomon, p. 1
18. A quote from the film, of course. I see Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1957) and *Vertigo* as companion-pieces in their philosophical understanding; I analysed *The Wrong Man* in 'The MacGuffin' #20.
19. Solomon, pp. 1-2
20. Solomon, p. 2
21. B. Garrett, "Poet as Prophet", on the www. Brenda Garrett teaches at the University of Alberta. There are, of course, other modern critiques of

Romantic attitudes. I believe that Christopher Morris uses the writings of Paul De Man for this purpose.
22. Quoted in Mogg, p. 146
23. I have analysed this 'quickening' process on the 'MacGuffin' website. See, for example, the page on *The 39 Steps* that I have put up there.
24. How pathetic, I suggest later, is the mother's attempt to attribute a *cause* of the bird attacks. And yet how Schopenhauerian that the viewer should be 'singled out' for blame. Of course, the real 'cause' is Will, which is everywhere and nowhere (in this phenomenal world), yet the mother has a point. According to Schopenhauer's *principium individuationis*, i.e., the principle of individuation, 'the [phenomenal] world is *my* representation'. Each *one* of us is bound in subjectivity, or illusion, and the need to attribute a cause is *part* of that illusion-making process. (The need to think in terms of time and space, which according to Kant and Schopenhauer are mental categories, is the remaining part of that process.)
25. An emphasis on grace, detectable in Hitchcock's films, was no doubt a reason why some French critics considered him a 'Jansenist'.
26. M. Kuntz, "The Catholic Vision in Hollywood", in 'Film History', Vol. 14, No. 2, 2002, p. 130
27. D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 328
28. See Gottlieb (1995), p. 109
29. Cf Mogg, p. 180
30. Mogg, p. 180. Additional information off the www.
31. A. Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. 1
32. J.L. Smith, 'Melodrama' (1973), p. 1
33. Ackroyd, p. 371
34. O. Sitwell, 'Dickens', (1932), p. 15
35. Cf Ackroyd, p. 258
36. Ackroyd, pp. 258-59
37. In episode 12 again.
38. B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1997), p. 265
39. Ackroyd, p. 384. Of course, like Schopenhauer, Hitchcock was thoroughly aware of the *drawbacks* (as well as *strengths*) of such knowledge. See his remarks to Oriana Fallaci in S. Gottlieb, 'Alfred Hitchcock Interviews' (2003), p. 61.
40. P. Klee, 'On Modern Art' (1966), p. 43
41. Gish says this in a documentary *Lillian Gish: The Actor's Life* ... (n.d.) that I watched recently.
42. C. Birch, 'Regaining Compassion for Humanity and Nature' (1993), p. 223
43. Hitchcock & Bouzereau, p. 214
44. E.J. Hollingdale (ed.), 'Schopenhauer: Essays and Aphorisms' (1970), p. 189
45. S Doss-Davezac, "Schopenhauer according to the Symbolists", in D. Jacquette (ed.), 'Schopenhauer, Philosophy, and the Arts' (1996), p. 249
46. Quoted in C. Janaway, 'Schopenhauer' (1994), p. 71
47. Janaway, p. 71
48. Janaway, p. 48
49. Janaway, p. 63
50. Janaway, p. 64
51. See Gottlieb (2003), p. 70.
52. The interview is in one of Patrick McGilligan's 'Backstory' series. I quote from memory.
53. See Gottlieb (2003), p. 90.
54. I thank Robert Eason, Dr Tinsley Sincox, and Dr Rick Worland, all of Southern Methodist University, for arranging for my 'representative', Kelly Greene (whom I also thank), to view the print of *The Pleasure Garden* held in the G. William Jones Collection.
55. Both prints are available on DVD from a Hitchcock aficionado, Al Chafin, in Florida. Al's website has full details and is located at <www.AlfredsPlace.com>. (Mention us!)
56. Hitchcock & Bouzereau, p. 42
57. D. Paini, "All the World's a Stage ...", in D. Paini and G. Cogeval (eds), 'Hitchcock and Art' (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2000), p. 245
58. Beatrice Mayor's play is included in 'Plays of Today', Third Volume (1930).
59. Or India. The novel's author spent her early years there. See O. Sandys, 'Full and Frank' (1941), Ch. 1.
60. This is stated by Kazanjian himself on the *Family Plot* DVD.
61. Mogg, p.12
62. I'm thinking of the 'Laziest Gal in Town' number in *Stage Fright*. Actually, re Hamilton and Jill in *The Pleasure Garden*, I'm only speculating, or assuming, that he makes out with her. I wouldn't be categorical about it.
63. Spoto, p. 17
64. Mogg, p. 12
65. C. Barr, "Stannard, Eliot", in B. McFarlane (ed.), 'The Encyclopedia of British Film' (2003), p. 633
66. C. Barr, 'English Hitchcock' (1999), p. 25
67. C. Jung, 'Memories, Dreams, Reflections' (1971), p. 68, including its footnote
68. Jung, p. 68
69. Jung, p. 69
70. Jung, p. 68
71. Mogg, p. 158
72. See Gottlieb (2003), p. 51.
73. C. Asquith, 'Portrait of Barrie' (1954), p. 34
74. Ackroyd, p. 375
75. Ackroyd, p. 376
76. See 'The MacGuffin' #27.
77. E. Bentley, 'The Life of the Drama' (1969), p. 184
78. Bentley, pp. 184-85
79. Bentley, p. 189
80. Bentley, p. 190
81. Cf Janaway, pp. 82-83
82. Wagner, quoted in Magee, p. 387. Hitchcock, it's worth pointing out, often emphasised that he regarded acting as a very protean matter, even to the point where a good actor must, psychologically at least, be bisexual.
83. Quoted in J.B. Priestley, 'The English' (1975 Penguin edition), p. 30

84. Both quotes in Priestley, p. 30
85 Quoted on the www in an article on Agatha Christie originally published in 'The Independent on Sunday', 4 October, 2003
86. J. Foley, "Doubleness in Hitchcock: Seeing the Family Plot", 'Bright Lights' #7 (1978), p. 16
87. *Family Plot* studio screenplay (#02079), January 13, 1975, shot 79, p. 43
88. *Family Plot* studio screenplay, shot 80, p. 43
89. See B. Krohn, "A Hitchcock Mystery", 'The MacGuffin' #27 (December 2000), pp. 2-4.

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Some further relevant information is on our website, whose Index page is at <www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.

ODD SPOT: THE SAMUEL BECKETT CONNECTION IN *REAR WINDOW*

Remember the hurdy-gurdy tune that is playing in *Rear Window* (1954) when Thorwald (Raymond Burr) shoos away the little dog that is sniffing in his flower bed - the little dog who is later found strangled? (For those who want to check, the tune begins at about the 53-minute mark of the film.) In one of Hitchcock's most complex - soundtrack-wise - of films, this touch is particularly inspired. The tune is based on Paginini's 'Carneval di Venezia' (heard during the 'railway carriage' scene in Max Ophuls's *Letter From An Unknown Woman* [1948]), which became attached, with undoubted ironic intent, to *two* tunes associated with the violent death of a dog (before *Rear Window*, that is). The first of these was the German drinking song 'Ein Hund kam in die Kuche' ('A dog came in the kitchen'), the second the ditty 'Un chien vint dans l'office' heard at the start of Act II of Samuel Beckett's 'En attendant Godot'/'Waiting For Godot' (1952). In other words, Hitchcock's and Franz Waxman's use of the tune in *Rear Window* is proleptic, signalling the unfortunate dog's death at the hands of the murderer, Thorwald.

• Patrick McGilligan's 'Alfred Hitchcock: A Life In Darkness and Light' (2003) notes that the idea of the upstairs couple in *Rear Window* who put their dog in a basket and lower it to the courtyard (with its fatal garden bed) was sold to Hitchcock by screenwriter Whitfield Cook (*Stage Fright* [1950]) for a cool $5,000.

(This 'Odd Spot' is based on an original insight of Inge Pruks.)

'The MacGuffin' is indexed by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), Brussels, and in 'Film Literature Index', New York. This issue printed by TS Press, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia. Publication authorised by Australian Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of individuals, unless otherwise indicated. Mensa as a body has no opinions. Anyone may write for or subscribe to 'The MacGuffin'. Correspondence, etc., should reach the Editor, Ken Mogg, at 18 Twyford Street, Box Hill North, Victoria 3129, Australia. Our email address is <muffin@labyrinth.net.au>, and we're on the www at <http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin>.